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Romanian orphans still need help

Romania experiencing spiritual, social crisis

COURTESY JAMES KWANTES

A Romanian orphan awaits adoption.

James Kwantes

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — As a child growing up under an oppressive Communist regime in Romania, John Oros was told: "In this generation, Christians will disappear from the land." When Oros became a computer analyst who organized Bible studies and did not hide his Christian beliefs, his faith cost him promotions to management.

As the grip of Communist repression intensified, Oros was forced to flee Romania in 1988. A year later, Oros's wife, Viorica, also defected. In 1990, Oros returned to Romania to rescue his two daughters after it became evident the secret police were blocking the childrens' exit from the country.

Oros is now in the business of rescuing Romanian children full-time. He is the church ministry representative of Child Rescue International, an outreach program that seeks to feed, clothe and minister to the thousands of orphans and abandoned children living in the poverty of present-day Romania. The organization is a division of Mission Without Borders, an Abbotsford-based relief and missionary organization focusing on Eastern Europe.

The plight of Romania's orphans was well-chronicled in the Western media in the weeks following the overthrow and execution of despot Nicolae Ceausescu in 1989. At a recent church service in Trinity Christian Reformed church in Abbotsford, Oros gave the congregation and updated report on what's happening in Romania.

Worse by the day

"The situation is worsening day by day," says Oros, who now attends a Baptist church in Cloverdale, B.C., with his family. He explained that most Romanians are too poor to feed and clothe their large families, with birth control being unaffordable for most. As a result, families often abandon children by the time the family size has grown to six or seven.

"Nicolae Ceausescu denied the existence of orphans," Oros said. "But after he was shot by his own people on Christmas Day in 1989, we found there were 641 orphanages and more than 11,000 orphans and abandoned children jam-packed and warehoused in these orphanages." In that country of 23 million, Oros said there are an additional 600,000 children handicapped or disabled in some way, often because of a lack of vitamins and proper nutrition.

To help these children, Child Rescue International has a sponsorship program similar to that of other relief organizations in which people can support a Romanian orphan by paying about $30 a month. That total keeps a child properly clothed, fed and gets them their first Bible. Sponsored children also keep a picture of the sponsor on the first page of their Bible and pray for them. The organization now supports more than 27,000 orphans (13,500 through sponsorship) in 172 orphanages in Romania.

Oros believes the time is ripe for another Reformation in Eastern European countries like Romania, where people have been spiritually malnourished and are hungry for God's Word.

"Hundreds upon hundreds of churches were bulldozed down and demolished, and hundreds of pastors were interrogated, some imprisoned and many of them killed," said Oros. "Why? Because they preached the hope we have in Him and in His Word. Communists did not like

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Citizens looking to make impact with new pro-life/pro-family group

Calgary group initiating nationwide network

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — Since June, a group of about 25 people have been meeting monthly at Calgary's Life and Family Centre, a co-ordinating office for the city's pro-life, 'pro-family' groups, such as the Alberta Women United For Families.

Gathering around a large corporate meeting table they begin by singing the national anthem; they close with a prayer. Over tea, juice, coffee and cookies the group — mostly conservative Christians, but with a few non-church-goers — talks about how the judicial, political, educational and public policy systems in Canada at all levels of government have let them down.

"Why doesn't the government listen to us? " runs the refrain. They believe that the majority of Canadians share their values, and contend that the public policy system in Canada has been taken hostage by a radical minority.

To counter that trend, the Calgarians have worked to establish Citizen Impact Canada, a new national organization that wants to re-introduce Judeo-Christian values to public policy making.

"There's something going on in this country that's hurting people," says Judy Rushfeldt, one of the members who, along with her husband, Brian, is a key organizer. They cite increased crime, abortion, drug use, teen pregnancies, homosexual activity and the breakdown of the traditional family of husband, wife and children. "Let's do something about it," she says.

Moral convictions being ignored

Impact Canada president Jack Baribeau, a London, Ont.-area construction contractor and pro-life activist, says in a letter to potential donors and supporters: "Some have described our nation as lacking a moral compass. There's a feeling of frustration shared by people of faith that their moral convictions are being ignored by our decision makers. Many have recognized that their lack of involvement has allowed the influence of a

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Citizen Impact wants a voice

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God-less, value neutral, morally bankrupt ideology to dominate the political process of our country."

Baribeau will be directing Citizen Impact's eastern development office from near London, in Dorchester, Ont., where he lives.

"People who have never participated in social or political action are searching for a way to have their voices heard," he asserts.

Blueprint for affiliates

Citizen Impact Calgary is expected to become the "pacesetter" for future affiliates in major cities and towns across the country. Baribeau says that besides Calgary and London, there is already interest in starting affiliates in Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Toronto, Sudbury, Sarnia, Guelph and Kitchener.

Calgary organizers and a few other groups have been working diligently for the past year to put together a blueprint that would establish the framework for a successful membership drive, and for a strategic network of grassroots affiliates. With the Calgary group's help, organizers hope the affiliates will be comprised of trained, confident, effective activists.

In a detailed manual, Citizen Impact says a good affiliate leader should have "a strong desire to restore our country's greatness by reaffirming our Judeo-Christian heritage and foundation."

The leader should be a person of "Christian maturity," political awareness, persistence, patience, good communications skill and credibility within the community. He or she is urged to pull together a reliable core of personal friends, politically aware citizens and other volunteers to build a grassroots organization. "Make sure they will support you in your position as affiliate leader with their prayers, time and money," says the manual.

From the start, an affiliate is encouraged to establish strong prayer support and to appoint a prayer co-ordinator. "It is important for us as leaders to acknowledge God in our decisions, as well as to look to God for the grace, wisdom and direction to do what he has called us to do," the manual says. "Perhaps no ingredient is as crucial to the establishment of a successful CIC affiliate as prayer."

It is suggested that information meetings be held to call together 15 to 30 leading pastors, business people and key members of like-minded organizations. Initially an incorporated affiliate will have about 30 members who will pay $20 each for a membership.

Early on, each affiliate will be expected to raise $5,000 to purchase a package of state-of-the-art communications software and hardware and a compatible computer. "This is a must," says the affiliate leaders' manual. That's because the national organization is creating a cybernetwork among its affiliates that will connect them to a common date base, establish e-mail communications, and give them and the public access to Citizen Impact's Web site.

Sophisticated Organization

Through the grid, Citizen Impact will be able to obtain election candidate score cards and a voter indentification system, as well as make available current research and information aimed at bypassing the general news media.

Once in place, several committees will be established to raise money, prepare for elections, deal with local issues, develop a youth wing with campus clubs, and identify contacts in the community — from pastors to politicians.

As time goes on, Citizen Impact Canada plans to organize along the lines of federal ridings, with breakdowns right to the neighborhood level.

When all is said and done, the group encourages supporters to thank those serving them. "And," organizers say, "most of all, thank God for his blessings."

Calgary pastor uses a Canadian flag pin as a tie tack

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — The Maple Leaf hangs in his office and flies from a tall flag pole in the backyard of his MacEwan home. And he hands out the red and white flag for others to wave while singing "O Canada" at his Citizen Impact Canada meetings.

"What I realized a while ago is that Canada is our inheritance," says the field director for the western development office of Citizen Impact. "I have a heart that says let's not destroy that inheritance. I'd like our grandchildren to have as great an inheritance as I have had."

COURTESY BRIAN AND JUDY RUSHFELDT

Brian and Judy Rushfeldt

Concern echoed by many

Pastor Brian Rushfeldt's concern for the future of Canada is echoed repeatedly by supporters of Citizen Impact, a new national organization that wants to restore Judeo-Christian values to the public policy process.

Rushfeldt's wife, Judy, recalls how they felt after returning from a missionary trip to the former Soviet Union a few years ago. The couple were appalled to see what happened to a country that had lost its inheritance and its foundational moral code.

"We came back with a passion to preserve what God has given us," says Judy.

The two, who run Victory Bible College, are actively involved with Victory Churches of Canada, a Calgary-based conservative evangelical church that has enjoyed phenomenal growth in recent years. They say various factors have spurred them on: abortion, youth crime, increasing societal violence, disrespect for authority, a lenient justice system, an activist homosexual agenda, attempts to redefine the family, and degeneration of the country's moral climate.

They want to remind Canadians that the country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles, principles which they believe are the basis for a safe and orderly society. From their point of view, those principles promote the sanctity of life, protect the vulnerable, encourage sexual abstinence outside of marriage, and uphold the "traditional" family model of husband, wife and children, regarding it as the best environment in which to raise children.

They believe that there are natural laws that God created to ensure order and good conduct within society. When people follow them, they and the nation prosper. Deviate from those laws, the nation and its people deteriorate. "We're opposed to certain behaviors and certain situations that are destructive," says Rushfeldt.

Tired of not being included

The Rushfeldts don't believe their views should be characterized as those of a fundamentalist group of Bible thumpers. Nor do they see themselves as intolerant or discriminatory. They merely want the opportunity to express their point of view and be heard, not ignored. "I'm sick and tired that we don't have the right to sit at the table," says Judy, echoing a sentiment expressed frequently by Ralph Reed, director of the Christian Coalition in the U.S. In a few short years, the coalition has pulled together 1.8 million supporters across the U.S. and become a political force to be reckoned with, particularly within the Republican Party.

The Rushfeldts, along with about 40 other Canadians, attended the Coalition's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in September. They say the majority of Canadians across the spectrum, both those who attend church and those that don't, as well as those in other faiths, support their values.

Poll after poll, they say, indicate most Canadians support pro-life, pro-family issues. Unfortunately, they add, most Canadians don't vote. They cite an Angus Reid poll that found 68 per cent of respondents believe the best type of family in which to raise children has two heterosexual parents, one at work and one assuming full-time responsibility for managing the home and family. Another poll indicates that 78 per cent of Canadians regard themselves as Christian.

If they can be mobilized, the country's political and moral climate would be dramatically changed, the Rushfeldts say. "We're all paying the price for the breakdown of the fundamental, common sense things that people would like to have."

News

Hawaii judge legalizes gay marriages; decision on hold pending appeal

HONOLULU, Hawaii (EP) — A Hawaii judge ruled Dec. 3 that the state's refusal to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples constitutes illegal discrimination, but issued an order the following day forbidding officials from granting licenses for homosexual couples while the case is appealed. The appeal could take a year.

First Circuit Judge Kevin Chang ruled in favor of three homosexual couples, saying the state failed to present a "compelling reason" to justify banning same-sex marriages.

The case began in 1990, when the three couples were denied marriage licenses. They filed a lawsuit, and in 1993 the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that denying marriage licenses for same-sex couples constituted gender discrimination and violated the equal protection clause of the state constitution.

That court ordered the case back into a lower court and said the state must show a compelling interest if it wanted to continue its ban on same-sex marriage.

The state argued that the ban on same-sex marriages is not gender discrimination, since both men and women can get marriage licenses. "The law does not discriminate on the basis of sex. It makes distinctions on the basis of sexual orientation, not sex," said Deputy Attorney General Rick Eichor, who represented the state. "Nothing in the constitution prohibits such distinctions."

The state also was unsuccessful in arguing that it had a compelling interest in promoting optimal development of children in traditional families. "We believe the evidence has shown that male-female relationships are the most likely to promote child development," Eichor said during closing arguments. "Children need a mother, father, and male-female influences in their home."

State can identify 'reasonable structure'

Eichor added, "The state is entitled to identify the structure we believe is reasonable. If marriage is reduced to love only, then why not allow three, four, or more people who love each other to marry?"

Because the U.S. Constitution's "full faith and credit" clause requires states to honor contracts made in other states, there was a chance that the Hawaii decision could have forced other states to legally recognize same-sex marriages performed in Hawaii. To foreclose that possibility, the Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and allows states to ignore homosexual marriages performed in other states. Also, 16 states have passed laws denying recognition of same-sex marriages performed in other states, and two others have executive orders in place to that effect.

Deciding the fate of marriage?

In response to the Hawaii decision, California state Sen. Pete Knight promised to reintroduce a bill blocking recognition of same-sex marriage in California. "If we don't act soon, our public policy will be undermined when same-sex partners bring Hawaii marriage licenses back to this state and demand their relationships be recognized as somehow equal to traditional marriage," said the Republican legislator, whose bill was passed by the state Assembly but fell short in the Senate.

The American Center for Law and Justice called the ruling an "outrage." Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for the organization, said, "We're extremely disappointed that Hawaii chose to unravel a 6,000-year-old institution of marriage consisting of a man and a woman." Sekulow added, "The issue of same-sex marriage has become the championship bout of legal battles involving the family. This issue — and the Hawaii decision — strike at the core of who we are as a people in this country."

Rev. Louis Sheldon, head of the Traditional Values Coalition, said the ruling "marks the beginning of a national debate which will decide the central moral issue of our civilization — the fate of the institution of marriage." He added, "This is only the beginning. No reasonable American will support this extreme effort to sanctify and sanction something which is sinful and unnatural."

Redeemer, ICS have mixed reactions to new education report

Marian Van Til

ANCASTER, Ont. — A report released on Dec. 17 by Ontario's five-member Panel on Future Directions for Post-secondary Education "has opened the door to privately funded universities in Ontario," says Redeemer College president Dr. Justin Cooper. But Dr. Harry Fernhout, president of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, calls the report "disgusting."

Cooper believes that Redeemer could finally be given the right to grant regular bachelors degrees instead of the "Bachelor of Christian Education" it must grant because the province sees it as a Bible school rather than a liberal arts university.

But Fernhout doesn't see "any advance in recognition of religion-based institutions as regular universities. The report maintains the status quo."

A role, if a limited one

In a section called "A Limited Role for Privately Funded Universities" the report acknowledges that there are in Ontario "institutions that offer university-level programs from a particular religious perspective," and that "a very limited number of these institutions indicated to the Panel that they are seeking the authority to grant degrees with a secular name."

The panel said "no concensus around the current policy on the establishment of new privately financed universities was apparent from our consultations."

Fernhout feels that this statement may be critical: "With respect to degree-granting authority and degree designation for denominational colleges, we believe that their distinctive and important studies should continue to carry theological, religious, or restricted degree designations, unless such colleges affiliate with a university."

"Redeemer will argue they are not a denominational college. But I think they would agree that that's not what the [report's] authors have in mind."

However, Cooper says that previously they achnowledged no role for insitutions like Redeemer and would allow no new privately funded universities. But now they'll have a harder time discriminating against us on the basis of religion."

Redeemer has the support of MP Toni Skarica, who is an assistant to Education Minister John Snobelen, as well as that of other public officials. Public opinion also seems to be in their corner, for what that's worth. Cooper appeared on a radio talk show on Dec. 18, and all but one of the calls were favorable. It was seen as a matter of justice, if Redeemer meets the qualifications necessary.

The 87-page report was the culmination of five-months of province-wide hearings, with submissions by colleges, universities, student and faculty associations and other groups. Both Redeemer and ICS made presentations to the panel. The report will now be sent to Education Minister Snobelen for his action — or inaction.

Cooper notes that it would require no additional public monies on the part of the province to grant Redeemer full status as a privately funded university.

Romanians 'purified by fire'

...continued from page 1

that and they did whatever they could to stop the spread of the gospel."

He compared the long-persecuted Romanian church to gold that is purified by fire: "The Christian church in Romania is emerging as a pure body. It has passed the suffering, oppression and martyrdom of Communism."

Oros said the situation has shifted from a time when Christian leaders were hunted by the secret police to a time when rulers in Romania realize they will need the help of Christians to get the country back on its feet.

"I strongly believe God is moving history and God moves people. The same people in the same government came to the conclusion that only the Christians will save the nation," said Oros, noting that the Romanian government recently issued an invitation to churches to help rebuild the country.

Oros detects in modern-day North America a spiritual malaise similar to the one that afflicted Romania, and notes that Eastern Europe is not the only part of the world in need of a Reformation.

Children brainwashed

"In Romania, the Communists brainwashed our children by telling them 'there is no God' and 'we are just animals' and 'when you die, that's it,'" said Oros. "This kind of ideology, unfortunately, is spread all over Canada and the United States now, the 'I'm OK, you're OK' attitude."

Nevertheless, Oros is thankful for the freedom that Canada has offered him and his family, especially after suffering under the stifling grip of atheistic Communism: "It's a post-Christian world, but still a good world." Oros is now working towards his doctorate of ministry in missiology from Trinity International University in Deerfield, Ill. His wife, Viorica, attends Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., where she is working towards her master's degree in Christian counselling.

For more information on sponsoring a Romanian orphan call toll-free: 1-800-494-4454; or write to: Child Rescue International, #201-31236 Wheel Avenue, Abbotsford, BC V2T 6G9.

Editorial

Make 1997 the year of speaking the truth in love

Not too long ago, I read in an introduction to a book some valuable insight about speaking the truth in love. The writer of the introduction was the Most Rev. Michael G. Peers, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. Although I forgot the title of the book, I know from what he wrote that it contained essays that were highly critical of the Anglican Church.

In the introduction, Peers made reference to a well-known and often-quoted verse in the Bible: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Eph. 4:15). About that text he writes the following:

"Sometimes people use those words as if 'in love' were an adverbial modifier describing the way we should speak, a kind of theological version of the words of the song, 'putting it my way, but nicely.' But years ago one of the great teachers of the Canadian church, Bishop William Coleman, taught me that the words 'in love' belong with 'truth,' not with 'speaking.' The truth-in-love is one concept, a whole entity, and it is what we are called to speak. If either part is weak, then the whole is weak. Loving words that are not true are not loving. True words spoken unlovingly are not true. Proclaiming the gospel must be 'speaking the truth-in-love.' "

We don't yell a lot

I find this a soul-cleansing statement about how we should speak to each other, whether we are proclaiming the gospel, writing editorials, articles and letters to the editor, or communicating with our loved ones, neighbors and fellow workers. As we begin the year of our Lord 1997, we could do worse than focusing on how to speak "good" to each other.

Some people speak in a hateful way. We have little difficulty pointing out the weakness of that undisguised way of talking. Sometimes we yell at each other. That's quite obviously wrong. Sometimes we kill each other with dripping sarcasm. But most of us are clever enough to know that we can't get away with that in the long run, at least not in a public forum. There is such a thing as a public image to think about.

So we moderate our statements and we tone down the volume, and we try to sound like reasonable and approachable people.

The spear of kindness

The real problem with speaking the truth in love is that we have found a substitute that easily passes for the real thing. We can find it at church and school meetings. We can find it in official correspondence. We can even hear it in sermons and prayers. I have heard prayers that dripped with righteousness and piety that could kill an elephant. How often have we not impaled people, all the while pretending to be kind and observing all the niceties of communication. But the trouble is that we did not love them deeply. Some people never lose their cool; they are always correct in how they address you. But they do not speak love/truth.

They speak what they consider to be the truth in a nice way, and think that they have then done justice to Paul's words. But speaking nicely is not important. Speaking love/truth *is*. Speaking out of the unity of the Spirit is of the utmost importance.

The mature speech

Speaking love/truth is sending out carefully thought-through messages that are intended to build up other people. Love/truth emerges out of humility and gentleness of spirit. Love/truth comes from an unselfish person who does not take him- or herself too seriously, but is courageous enough to take a stand when called upon. Love/truth takes the risk of rejection in order to keep others from falling asleep or taking a bad turn in the road. Love/truth can be highly critical of a person's actions or words while seeking the well-being of the other person.

The word "instead" that starts off the text in Ephesians indicates that there is another way of speaking. That other way is a way characterized by childishness and lack of maturity. Paul urges his readers to grow up and speak as adults. The adult way is the love/truth way. The rest is speaking half truths in a correct way.

Let's make 1997 the truth-in-love year when it comes to addressing each other and the world.

BW

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A song for times of trouble

One of our readers sent in a Dutch song that is well-known to older members of our community: "Beveel Gerust Uw Wegen." She asked me to translate it since it means a lot to her. I offer it here as a gift to the readership. It's the kind of song that is suitable for singing at year-end services or at difficult times in the lives of believers.

Commit your way in stillness
and all that gives you pain
to God whose care and blessing
flows from his sovereign reign.
He indicates direction
to clouds and winds and skies.
Will you not find protection
who on his strength relies?

Trust in the Lord's compassion,
the outcome will be good.
and place your hope in heaven
For health and daily food.

No worries will convince him,
no moaning or complaints.
Only your prayers will sway him;
he listens to his saints.

Let God do all the watching;
He knows what he must do.
Let him perform his wonders;
He will astonish you.
He steers the course of planets
with power from on high.
Will not his love encompass
Those things that make you cry?

BW

Letters

What kind of women are getting my money?

I don't know how knowledgeable the two Ontario women quoted in "Reform's new status of women critic not fully welcomed" (CC, Nov. 8) are of the intent and agenda of the various government [-funded] women's groups. Are they aware that the government (we, the taxpayers) is funding some 677-plus organizations through the National Action Committee on the Status of Women?

Do they know what is being funded here? Do they know that the government (we, the taxpayers) funded 82 women to the tune of $128,000 to 'force' their feminist, anti-family, anti-life agendas on other nations' national laws, religious and cultural values? How much do any of us know about these women's groups and their goings on?

Of all people, Sharon Hayes, the Reform Party's new status of women critic, is most knowledgeable in this area. She is a truly humble Christian MP who is striving to restore Christian, pro-family, pro-life, realistic and equal values in government. Should we not do all we can to put our support behind her and other people like her?

Joanne Boessenkool
Surrey, B.C.

Maybe Yitzhak Rabin had to be murdered

I was surprised to read in the Nov.15 "Chapter and Verse" column by the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven about the Millennium. At least, now we know Rev. Kuyvenhoven's view on this enormous, unknown event that is coming soon.

His view is not shared by everyone.

It is really too bad that the two great Reformers, Calvin and Luther, avoided writing about this event. They have both written many Bible commentaries but they left us not a single note about the book of Revelation, for the simple reason that they did not know what to do with it.

We know that some of our pastors tell us that the Millennium is past, while others consider it completely symbolic. Some of us believe it literally.

Personally, I read the accounts in the Old and New Testaments with a smile and with distinct happiness because we Christians may reign with Christ *and* the Jews, who are still a persecuted race.

We will reign with the Jews

If we read the Old Testament passages about the restoration of Israel, we may think that it is only for Israel or only for the Jews. But if we read Rev. 20, Jesus tells us that we, too, as redeemed Christians, belong to the ruling party.

Take also a close look at Jer. 29:14; 30:2,3. Read the whole chapter 31 and 51:5. And do I have to remind you of Ezekiel 37 and Zechariah 8:23 and chapter 14?

Is there anyone who does not believe in a real earthly rule in and from Jerusalem? I know very well that our dear CRC in general is hesitant to explain these passages, but it is in the Bible and the Bible is true. And the Jews are God's time clock.

Yitzhak Rabin was murdered and his murderer said it was the will of God. Maybe he was right. Maybe Israel must have a stronger leader. Rabin was for peace, as we all are. But apparently it was not God's time yet. It was maybe for that reason that Netanyahu was chosen.

Every time we encounter persecution of our Christian schools and every time we think of our Christian labor movement, we must focus our minds on the future and say, "Just a few more years, and then we will be the government and reign with Christ from Jerusalem."

One of these days the Lord will return. Blessed is the person who trusts in him and will rule with him.

Peter D. Mellegers
St. Thomas, Ont.

Lambs belong to the Shepherd

In response to the column "Why infant baptism?" (Marian Den Boer, Nov. 22), allow me to make the following comment:

When confronted with this question my usual response is to ask: Since Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we as believers are his sheep, then to whom do the lambs belong? In baptism we are witnessing God showing us that they, too, belong to him.

Keep up the good work. I wish your staff a Blessed New Year.

John Jonker
Red Deer, Alta.

No Calvinist farmer followed the whims of the land's contours

With interest I read the Nov. 22 story "Calvin Prof outlines 'theology from the tractor seat.'" by Jan Curry-Roper. (By the way, is this author related to D.L. Roper who wrote *Biblical Foundation for Radical Discipleship*? Superb.)

In my spare time I study geography in relation to religious attitudes towards a built environment (land planning). It was interesting to see how in Curry-Ropers search both religion and ethnicity work in tandem when farmers interact with the land and with each other.

In the Lower Fraser Valley, B.C., immigrants of Dutch background after World War II had somewhat similar views of farming life. One could divide them into the orthodox Calvinists and the ultra-conservative group. The orthodox (neo-) Calvinists showed a strong religious adherence to institutions such as Christian farmers associations, labor unions, schools, newspapers and political parties. The ultra-conservative group is perhaps best illustrated in Sietze Buning's poem "The Calvinist farmer," where you notice that there is an arbitrary relationship between doctrine ("being perfect," "predestination," "order"), and everyday life (in this instance, farming).

Our Calvinist farmers wore neckties with their bib-overalls and straw hats, a touch of glory with their humility. They rode their horse-drawn corn planters like chariots, planting the corn in straight rows, each hill of three stalks three feet from each hill around it, even up the rises. A field-length wire with a metal knot every three feet ran through the planter and clicked off three kernels at each knot. Planting in east/west rows, the row also ran north/south for cross-cultivating. Each field was checkerboard, even the diagonal.

No Calvinist followed the land's contour. Contour farmers in surrounding counties improvised their rows against the slope of the land. Before *our* fathers planted a field, they knew where each hill of corn would be. Be perfect, God said, and the trouble with contour farmers was that, no matter how hard they worked at getting a perfect contour, they could never know for sure it was perfect — and they didn't even care. At best they were Armenian, or Lutheran, or Catholic, or at worst secular. Though they wore bib-overalls, they wore no neckties, himility without glory.

Contour fields resulted from free will, nary a cornstalk predetermined. The God contour-farmers trusted seemed to the Calvinists as capricious as their corn fields. Calvinists knew their distance between God and the people was even greater than the distance between people and corn kernels. If we were corn kernels in God's planter, would we want him to plant random?

George Lieuwen
Langley, B.C.

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Redeemer appoints new VP and foundation director

CC Staff

ANCASTER, Ont. — Redeemer College has announced the appointment of Bill van Staalduinen to a two-pronged position as the college's new Vice-President (Advancement) and executive director of the Redeemer Foundation. Bill Smouter, who currently holds the position, will retire on July 1, at which time van Staalduinen will take on the job.

Van Staalduinen joined Redeemer's administration in July 1996 after a career in senior management positions with the federal government in Ottawa.

Prisoner 88 continues to speak out

Heather Rude

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) — He steps to the microphone wearing a gray-and-white-striped cap and shirt labelled "Auschwitz Prisoner 88."

Although it's been more than 50 years since he was freed from the Nazi death camp, Sigmund Sobolewski remains in prison garb on a crusade against intolerance. "Apparently we didn't learn anything from what happened in the Second World War," he says on one of his many speaking engagements across North America. "There is another Auschwitz waiting for us if we're not careful."

Almost five years in Auschwitz

Sobolewski lived through the atrocities of Auschwitz for four and a half years. Arrested in 1940 at the age of 17 by the Nazis in a sweep of Polish intellectuals, he was the 88th prisoner to enter Auschwitz.

At the concentration camp, where an estimated 2.5 million people were murdered, he was segregated from Jewish inmates to work on the camp's fire brigade and likely was allowed to survive because he was a Catholic and spoke German.

Haunted by memories of the death camp and fearful of the future, Sobolewski has been reliving his experiences to warn people it could happen again.

"I have seen with my own eyes what happened to Jewish people and non-Jewish people," he says. "Women were sent to die if they were weak, limp or undernourished."

But the hatred Sobolewski witnessed in Auschwitz he has also witnessed at different levels in North America. He joined the merchant navy in England after the war and travelled to the United States where he saw separate bathrooms for "whites," and "coloreds." Several of his shipmates were West Africans and had to eat in a separate room from the other sailors.

Stop the train

Sobolewski is still witnessing bigotry. In 1995 he spoke at a school in Victoria, B.C., and saw pamphlets promoting the expulsion of Chinese and South Asian people from Canada.

"We have to be aware of how important the work of multicultural organizations is," he says. "There are some tremendous forces trying to influence our young students." He believes that some of these racist organizations have "big money" behind them. There are also people who have been brainwashed by the message of intolerance, Sobolewski asserts.

It was because he thought Canada would be a more tolerant country that he moved here. A retired welder, he now lives in Alberta and conducts lectures across the country to counter hatred.

"At the end of the railroad of intolerance is Auschwitz," Sobolewski says. "We have to stop the train at the start of the track so that we don't end up there."

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Alyce Oosterhuis

Blood transfusions

In the past few years I have often heard the lament that what is needed to revitalize aging Christian schools and communities is a blood transfusion. "New blood" is the demand when a school's enrollment suddenly declines, attendance at community functions drops off, donations to familiar charities are rolled back. I sometimes wonder what we think this "new blood" will produce: a heart transplant? a new vision? a schooling alternative?

And when is blood "new"? As I read the advertisements in *Christian Courier*, I am aware of the number of vacant principalships in the country. If principal X goes to community Y, is he/she "new blood" in that community? Or does "new blood" mean non-Reformed, unfamiliar, untested, untried? I suspect the latter to be the case when we call for "new blood" today.

I had occasion to be reminded of blood-letting and transfusions in schools recently when one of my past principals wrote to ask for my rendition of events that had transpired in 1969 when she was summarily dismissed from her post on June 22. We defended her rights to her job that summer and followed legal advice to establish a basic "squatter's rights" in the International School of Amsterdam. In August she lost the battle and we began the new school year with "new blood" that had been tested and tried successfully in other schools.

Don't look for scapegoats

Eventually the new principal became a wonderful friend and mentor; the school grew and new buildings were designed; programs expanded and a complete high school was added. But were all these changes to be attributed to the blood transfusion of 1969? Hardly. The growth and additions were related to the time and place of Amsterdam in the economic spectrum of activities: enhanced trade relations with Japan, the expansion of the European common market, etc. We would have grown regardless of which principal would have been at the post: both were competent and visionary women. But circumstances dictated that the "other" rather than the "first" was at the helm.

We tend to forget circumstances when we look for scapegoats on whom to blame diminishing income and declining enthusiasm. By the same token, we also tend to idolize the "heroes" who built various organizations and schools at a time of vast immigration influxes.

Ministers have been eulogized for encouraging mother churches to establish many fledgling offspring churches, as if the minister were solely responsible for the numbers who flocked to his mother church! And some of those early "saints" in vastly growing Christian school circles were not very saintly, nor particularly good principals, either.

So what's my point? If no single individual can take the credit for growth and expansion, then no single person should be faulted for contraction and/or stagnation.

Don't overlook the familiar

Change for the sake of change can be destructive of individuals as well as communities. Blood transfusions cannot occur for the sake of "new blood" as the primary requisite because blood typing demands a compatibility. In our Reformed communities we increasingly see a greater diversity of blood groups: balancing their often contrary demands causes many leaders to despair or resign.

The search for new directors or visionaries cannot, however, mean that we necessarily have to go outside of those community circles. The new leader could be one who is among us. What each community, charity, or school needs to do is to access who will be the "best" at this time and place, and do this without the blinders of preconceived notions about those who are familiar!

A new year has begun, more ads will appear in the subsequent weeks and months for principals and teachers in our Christian communities. I hope and pray that all those who interview their prospective applicants will be able to do so without the bias of demanding that he or she not be one of us!

Alyce Horzelenberg Oosterhuis teaches educational psychology at The King's University College in Edmonton.

ARTS & MEDIA

Books

Binder of Wounds:

A Medley of Meditations

Binder of Wounds: A Medley of Meditations, by Sini Den Otter-de Beer. Essence Publishing, Belleville, Ont., 1996. 129 pp. $11.95. Reviewed by Elly DeVries from London, Ont.

Each one of us has a unique life story. That story determines who we are and what we do or how we live. In her book, *Binder of Wounds*, Sini Den Otter shares her life story with us.

Sini writes that the gift of special ministry is intrinsic to a person but takes time to come to the conscious level. She traces her childhood memories of living in Rotterdam during World War II, her fear of fire and danger, and her dependence on prayer for food and safety. She writes about her immigration to Canada with her husband and the loneliness and homesickness she felt. While her four children were growing up, she sank into a depression. She recalls this time as a time of soul-searching and a looking for new directions. The movie *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom got Sini thinking about doing bedside ministry someday.

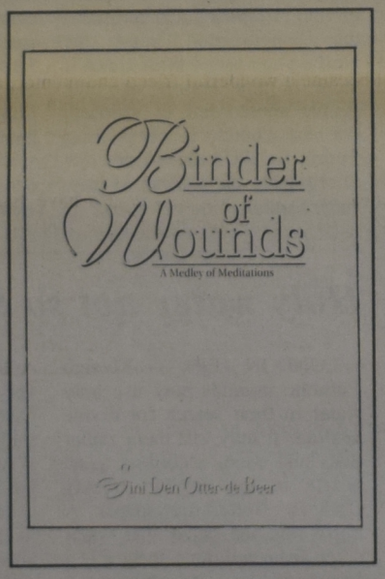
The power to choose

After graduating from university, God kept nudging her along, and she was accepted into her first unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.) where she visited the sick; she was forced to deal with her own childhood fears when she was assigned to the burn unit.

Sini then decided to study theology and take more C.P.E. In order to work as a professional chaplain, Sini needed endorsement from her faith community. Christian Reformed chaplains have traditionally been male and ordained. The Christian Reformed Church was not at that time ready to ordain women. But the CRC chaplain committee finally gave her the endorsement she sought.

Binder of Wounds is a collection of 41 meditations. Sini takes us from her sense of calling which led to her becoming the first female chaplain in the Christian Reformed Church, and allows us to walk with her as chaplain in an active treatment hospital.

In the meditation entitled *Prophetesses* Sini grieves over a world filled with physical and mental abuse as well as racial and gender inequality. Like the prophets and prophetesses in the Bible, she urges readers to name the injustices they confront. We have the power of choice, to make changes on a personal level and in our communities, to relate in new ways that respect one another as equals called to be God's people in a hurting world.



Sometimes a tragedy we face can leave us speechless. In the meditation *The Everlasting Arms* Sini describes the tearful goodbyes of a mother to her infant. The shock and grief of a Sudden Infant Death Syndrome mortality are horrendous. The mother, unable to bring herself to place her baby on the stretcher that would take the child away, places the baby in Sini's arms. Even though no words are spoken, love and compassion is communicated by being there.

In Sini's reflections she expresses that at that moment, she felt she was on holy ground. Jesus, who knew suffering like no other, stretches out his arms to receive our grief.

The *Binder of Wounds* was first delivered at a retreat for chaplains and their spouses in Grand Rapids, Mich. I was moved on hearing it then, and it was a joy to read it again. Sini shares her struggles: the cutbacks in the health care system and their effects on chaplaincy; the never-ending church debate about ordaining women — a women's issue to be decided by men; the death of a relative; and the suffering she finds in the world.

Both tender and strong

Sini relates seeing a slide of Rembrandt's painting *The Prodigal Son*. It shows the Father embracing his son. The Father's hands are unusual; one is slender and female, the other is a stubby male hand. This images God's healing hands, one tender and comforting when we need it, the other strong and able to lift us out of our misery and to allow us to become binders of wounds.

Following the call to ministry in the Christian Reformed Church was not an easy road to travel. It created a great deal of turmoil and anxiety in her life which surfaced in her dreams. Sini shares these with us in her meditation *Dreams*.

What is pastoral care? In her meditation *Burning Hearts* Sini writes of Jesus walking with the troubled travellers to Emmaus. He allowed them their grief and questions, and was with them when they asked the questions. He showed them compassion, identified with their struggles and allowed them to come to their own conclusions. This interaction is Sini's model for pastoral care.

The reader of this book witnesses Sini's daily journey with God, her compassion and her doubts. With today's shortened hospital stays, she sees many patients only once. Her strong belief that God will complete the work she begins is an inspiration to us all.

New guidebook features Toronto's cultural diversity

Book on Vancouver next

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) — Today's visitor to Toronto needs more than a guide featuring the CN Tower, Skydome, the Art Gallery of Ontario and other prominent places of interest, however compelling they may be. Strangers and frequent visitors alike will soon learn that Toronto is Canada's most multicultural city. That being the case, they'll benefit from *Passport's Guide to Ethnic Toronto*, a new book by Robert Kasher of London, Ontario.

Where most guides merely pay lip service to Toronto's mosaic, Kasher delves into 60 communities, including Afghans, Estonians, Icelanders and Laotians, as well as the more conspicuous Chinese, Hungarians, Italians, Portuguese and Vietnamese. As well as being a guide for the visitor, the book can be just as valuable to resident Torontonians who appreciate cultures other than their own.

Published by Passport Books of Lincolnwood, Illinois, at $19.95 (Cdn), the 368-page guide reveals the boundless pleasures to be enjoyed by the open-minded traveller. Painstaking research by Kasher has resulted in a guide that outlines the history of each community and lists places of worship, cultural organizations, holidays and celebrations, restaurants, cafes and nightclubs, food sources, shopping, news media and special community events.

There are even sections on the four components of the majority culture: English, Irish, Scots and Welsh. The freguently overlooked Canadians of Australian and New Zealand origins are also included; as are the Dutch.

For the visitor who wishes to explore Ontario beyond greater Toronto, there are sections offering information on attractions such as the Amazon fishing fleet at Port Dover, the Highland games in Fergus and the Old Order Mennonite community in St. Jacobs, near Kitchener-Waterloo.

Kasher, who says his book is selling well in both Canada and the U.S., offers a caveat to the reader. Restaurants should be called before visiting, and similar checks should be made with shopping destinations, since the author has no control over change of location. He says the publisher is planning an updated second edition. Meanwhile, Kasher is working on *Passport's Guide to Ethnic Vancouver*.

Born to Read delights new crop of kids and their parents

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) — On April 24, 1995, nearly 2,000,000 tiny tots raced home from school clutching *Born to Read*, a parents' guide to the wonderful world of reading. With their help, the book found its way into the homes of Canadians across the country, soon establishing it as the biggest selling Canadian book of all time. It was written and illustrated by Ben Wicks, one of Canada's best-known cartoonists and author of 20 other books.

In November 1996 *Born to Read* appeared once more, under the name *Born to Read and Write*, since it contains additional material on the value of learning to write. On Nov. 1, it was made available to 1.9 million school children in English and French. Kids aged four to eight were asked to take the book home and insist that their parents read it.

Though those copies were provided by corporate sponsors (Sears, AT&T, Mediacom and Canada Post), it is available in stores at $3.99, or at Sears stores at the discount price of $2.

A gift — with strings attached

CC Staff

SOWETO, S. Africa — World renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin handed over about 300 violins to South African president Nelson Mandella for distribution to underprivileged children, reported *The Sowetan* on Nov. 7, 1996.

Menuhin collected violins from across the world after South African music teachers told him during a visit in 1995 that there was a great need for the instruments.

Church/agricultural training centre improves life for Haitians

MARGARETTE SAINT FLEUR

Walls go up in St. Michel: a church for 1000, an agricultural centre for 23 co-ops.

ST. MICHEL, Haiti (FIDA) — Ground was broken on Sept. 5, 1996. By December 4 the foundation and floor had been poured, concrete-block walls erected and door frames put in place.

What is it? A 46' by 100' church for 1,000 people in St. Michel, Haiti, that doubles as an agricultural training centre for 23 co-operatives whose members support 3,000 Haitian families. Construction is being overseen by Jake Boldt, a Mennonite contractor from St. Catharines, Ont.

Considering the number of people who will use this building, the $100,000 price tag is a bargain. And all costs will be covered by Ontario donors to the Foundation for International Development (FIDA). FIDA is a Waterloo, Ont.-based organization in which many Mennonites are involved. It has been helping Haitian farmers for a decade by offering basic agricultural training, by drilling wells, capping springs, planting trees and constructing granaries for co-op members.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) recognizes FIDA's contribution to improving the lives of rural Haitians, and recently gave FIDA a 2 to 1 matching grant over the next two years to support 23 agricultural co-ops and to provide small loans to co-op members.

German tax cut may wake up churches, critics say

BONN, Germany (EP) — The German government is promising to cut income taxes sharply in 1999, a move that's good news for individual taxpayers but potentially bad news from the point of view of Germany's churches.

The churches get most of their money through a tax that is linked to income tax returns. Under the present system, a drop in government tax collections would mean a drop in church revenue. Germany's Catholics and Protestants (about 28 million of each) pay an extra eight or nine per cent surcharge on their income tax owed as churches taxes.

While churches worry that a cut in income would force them to cut social services, critics say they have grown inefficient due to guaranteed revenue, and suggest that a cut in the "church tax" would force churches to adopt economic reform.

Church of England to replace wedding banns

LONDON (EP) — Before a wedding is official in the Church of England (and in most of the Anglican Communion) the congregation must be notified and asked three times if there is any reason why the couple should not be married. But the church is considering ending its 800-year-old practice of requiring the reading of marriage banns.

Church leaders have voted unanimously to find an alternative to the practice one member called a "medieval anachronism." Vicar Canon Richard Hanford, who made a motion to drop the banns, told *The Times* of London, that the reading of the banns gives the wrong impression. "It is as if the church is not encouraging people to get married."

Holy water not so healthy

LONDON (EP) — Though Catholic invalids may use holy water in their search for divine healing, it may kill them rather than heal them, according to an article in the English weekly *Catholic Herald* newspaper. A nurse told the paper that water taken from religious shrines is a breeding ground for infection.

"It isn't the water itself that is the problem, but the way people collect it, contaminating it with very nasty germs with their hands and the bottles they use," said Linda Parsons, a nurse at Wiston Hospital near Liverpool. Pasons was part of a research team which discovered that relatives of sick people who brought holy water from overseas shrines were spreading infections.

Parents disown their children for renouncing Islam

Confessing Christ is costly

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Compass) — In the north of Ghana, as in other parts of Africa where Christians and Muslims have collided because of religious conflicts, many Muslims newly converted to Christianity have undergone severe persecution.

In March 1996 a 25-year-old woman, Paagatonga, married to the son of a Muslim leader in the northern border town of Paga, ran into serious trouble when she went with her friends to church.

When her husbnad confronted her, she admitted that she preferred to be a Christian because she now believed in Jesus. Her husband became so furious that he drove her out of the house. That was the end of her marriage. But it also ended her relationship with her young son. Paagatonga was nursing a two-year-old boy at the time. Her husband's family took the child from her and warned her never to step into her matirimonial home again.

Paagatonga had little choice but to return to her own mother. She is living there still and does odd jobs to fend for herself.

'Cut off forever'

When Abdulai, a 27-year-old Muslim, decided to switch his allegiance from Mohammed to Christ, he had no idea of the troubles that awaited him. He began to identify with the church in Navrongo, his home town. His excitement led him to talk about his faith to his own family. But his mother warned: "You know that your father will not take kindly to the things you are saying. Please be careful."

Abdulai's response was, "Why should I be ashamed of Jesus? When I was a Muslim I was not ashamed of Mohammed, so why should I be afraid to mention the name of Jesus?" Because of Abdulai's witness, all of his four brothers and two sisters also believed.

Abdulai's father, who had two wives and many other children, was a popular figure in Navrongo and a staunch Muslim who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, gaining the name "Alhaji." When villagers began to mock Alhaji for weakness because he couldn't control his children, he disowned them, "cutting them off forever," a serious matter in Islamic culture. But the Lord was already at work. Abdulai's mother owned two shops which she had worked very hard to make successful. When she and her children moved out of their husband and father's house, they lived and worked, day and night, in the shops. The unpleasant conditions were tough, but they prospered.

There are many Christian converts like Paagatonga and Abdulai. They try to encourage each other through prayer and visits. But none of them thinks about the cost. "We have believed in Jesus," says Abdulai, " and we shall not turn back."

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Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
* Al Wolters

Sucking the breasts of kings

"You will drink the milk of nations and be nursed at royal breasts" (Is. 60:16, NIV).
"You shall suck the milk of nations, you shall suck the breasts of kings" (Is. 60:16, NRSV).

This striking imagery is found in a chapter which the NIV translators have given the heading "The glory of Zion." The entire chapter is in the form of a speech directed toward Zion, which is personified as a woman, and depicts in graphic terms the blessings that await the people of God in the glorious future of promise. The verse we have quoted is a symbolic way of saying that Jerusalem will receive the best nourishment in that eschatological future.

One of the features of the Hebrew language which is usually lost in translation is the fact that second person verbs, such as the verb translated "you shall suck" in Is. 60:16, are gender and number specific. That is to say, the Hebrew original indicates whether the "you" in question is masculine or feminine, singular or plural. Throughout Isaiah 60 the verbs indicate that the "you" being addressed is feminine singular, indicating that Jerusalem is being personified as a woman. It is of her that the prophet says that she will "such the milk of nations" and "suck the breasts of kings."

A bizarre image?

But another gender-related feature of Isaiah's language in this verse does survive translation, namely the cross-gender imagery of "sucking the breasts of kings." Although the impact of this startling image is somewhat softened in the NIV, the original speaks quite literally of sucking the breasts of kings, as both the King James Version and the New Revised Standard Version make unmistakably clear. How are we to account for this graphic metaphor, which most contemporary readers experience as jarring, if not downright bizarre?

Part of the answer, of course, is that different cultures have different literary conventions and stock images. In our culture, for example, it sounds strange to praise a woman as being "cow-eyed," or having hair "like a flock of goats," but these images are not unusual in the poetry of Homer or the Song of Songs.

The rhetoric of kingship

Another part of the answer is that the image of kings as nurturing mothers was part of the rhetoric of kingship in the ancient Near East. An ancient Sumerian inscription designates a king as "counselling mother." And in a Phoenician royal inscription from the time of Salomon a king says of himself, "Baal made me a father and a mother to the Danunites." Another king from northern Syria at about the same time writes in an inscription: "To some I was a father. To some I was a mother. To some I was a brother." A little later in the same inscription he says of his subjects that "they were disposed toward me as an orphan is to his mother."

It may be that the comparison of a king to a mother was part of the standard rhetoric of kingship in the ancient Near East, and that Is. 60:16 simply reflects that widespread rhetorical convention.

If so, then this convention may also shed light on the fact that the Old Testament on a number of occasions compares God to a woman. Since the kingship of God is one of the dominant images, if not indeed *the* dominant image, of the Old Testament, it may be that its occasional use of feminine imagery for God simply reflects the king-as-mother metaphor of the standard royal rhetoric of the day.

Al Wolters teaches Bible and Greek at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont. He recently served on a denominational study committee dealing with the issue of "inclusive language for God."

The Mom Factor is a new book published by Zondervan (Grand Rapids, Mich.) which addresses "dealing with the mother you had, didn't have, or still contend with," according to the book's subtitle. Authors **Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend** identify six "mom types" that explain "how the mothering process breaks down in different ways." The results of these unhealthy mothering styles are relational, functional, spiritual and emotional problems in the adult, say the authors. **ISBN: 0-310-200369. $18.99 (US), hardcover; $14.99 (US) for the book on (2) tape(s.)**

Thief gets mercy from her victim

NEW YORK (EP) — A church administrator who stole more than $1 million in church funds won't go to prison, thanks to a plea for mercy from her employer, Bishop Thomas V. Daily. Vincenza Bologna, 53, the former manager of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn pension office, confessed to stealing $1.2 million from the church. Prosecutors said she spent the money on a luxurious lifestyle. Her annual church salary was $65,000.

Bologna will perform 1,000 hours of community service and pay the church $239,724 — the amount of the loss not covered by insurance. She could have faced up to 15 years in prison.

Sally Ann kettle takes Visa

AKRON, Ohio (EP) — The jingle of coins in a Salvation Army kettle may be joined by the smooth "snik" of credit card validation if an Akron, Ohio, experiment pays off. The Salvation Army's U.S. national office is testing a $3,000 credit-card-ready kettle that incorporates a pen-based computer. Salvation Army Maj. Frank Kirk said he hopes that by the end of the Christmas season, the kettle, the only one of its kind in the world — so far — "will lead to more donations."

RBC professor writes book on German Calvinism

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (RBC) — Reformed Bible College theology professor Dr. Lyle Bierma has written *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age*. The book focuses on the covenantal theology of Caspar Olevianus, a 16th century Reformer in Germany and co-author of the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

Bierma's comprehensive analysis of this founder of the covenantal theology which was a cornerstone of the Reformation, is the first time Olevianus (1536-1587) has been so thoroughly studied. The book's publisher is Baker Book House in Grand Rapids.

Bierma has taught at RBC since 1980. He graduated from Calvin College and Seminary, and earned a PhD from Duke University. While at Duke, Bierma received a Fulbright Fellowship to do research for a year at the University of Tubingen, Germany. His doctoral dissertation, written in the 1970s, was on Olevianus and formed the foundation for this current book.

As professor of theology at RBC Bierma teaches courses such as the History of Western Christianity, Christian Doctrine, Calvinism and the History of Missions. He is a member of the Interchurch Relations Committee of the Christian Reformed Church.

RBC prepares students for service in church and mission vocations and has some 2,400 alumni serving in 59 countries.

Video profiles dreams coming true

WINNIPEG (MCC) — What do single mothers in Bangladesh and people with disabilities in Alberta have in common? Both need employment and both are finding it through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-initiated job creation programs.

Some 160 Bangladeshis, mostly women abandoned by their husbands, are turning jute scraps and weeds into lovely paper through Shuktara Handmade Paper. Their products are sold in North American shops through Ten Thousand Villages, formerly called SELF HELP Crafts of the World. Some 70 Canadians who have had difficulty finding jobs are now recycling mountains of garbage through the Edmonton Recycling Society.

Thus, people on opposite sides of the globe can realize their dreams: to eat regular meals, to rent an apartment, to feel the pride that comes from having satisfying work.

This fast-paced, 23-minute MCC video includes group discussion questions and suggestions for inter-generational activities, such as recycling waste paper into paper that can be made into cards and stationary.

More Than a Job can be ordered from any MCC office.

Feature

Stained glass windows

Leanne Stam

I was in a cathedral recently. While there, I studied its stained glass windows at length. Each window represented a scene of a saint's life. It gave me courage to think of the many windows each person could have about his or her life, and the beautiful cathedrals that could exist were we to have the opportunity to depict our lives with stained glass.

I found it ironic that the beauty of the windows was in the *stain* of the glass. Again, how applicable to the stains in our experience that form who we are. How beautiful are the stained glass windows of our experiences. As I sat in the church, I pieced together a window of the last year of life of a dear woman. Each piece that made that last window was stained in beauty.

Detail of a 13th century window, Canterbury Cathedral.

Something felt strange in the air the minute I stepped into the house. Maybe it was the way people talked, or maybe it was just the commotion of furniture being moved hastily from one room to another. I had been gone one weekend, and the whole house had been turned upside down.

My dad approached me and gently took the basketball shoes that hung awkwardly off my shoulder, tied precariously by the laces. My muscles ached from the tournament, so I welcomed the chair he pulled out for me. I sat down at the kitchen table.

He looked uncomfortable, searching for words, it seemed. He smiled and told me that a lot had happened while I'd been gone. My grandmother had taken a bad fall, and it made everyone look at her declining health with concern. As of that weekend, she would be living in the house.

I grinned and said I thought it a wonderful idea, brushing off the thoughts of the effects the move would have on me personally. I dove into a subconscious gallery of missed shots and great plays from the weekend.

I chose a grey piece of glass for self-sacrifice.

"Two weeks," Mom mumbled, "two weeks. She sure floored medical science, didn't she?" She was biting her lip, making sure she didn't make eye contact with me. It had been a year. My grandmother was supposed to spend her last weeks in our loving home, but our love apparently was so strong that it had chased the cancer into remission.

With that remission, I watched "love" shrivel my mother away for a year as she sat vigil beside the "grandma monitor," sprinted upstairs when the "help" buzzer screamed through the house, washed around her mother's bed sores, cleaned out her mother's commode, curled her mother's wispy and balding hair to make her pretty on Sunday, and never left the house for more than a few hours.

Meanwhile I ground my teeth in frustration because I couldn't go out with my friends Saturday night: I had to "Grandma-sit" for a few hours.

I had to replace the dark blue glass of pride with deep gold glass of dignity.

I was home alone with her. She was eating her four o'clock tea biscuits in her room and I was watching TV downstairs, ready to spring into action when the buzzer sounded to indicate she needed help to her toilet on the other side of the bedroom.

I didn't hear a buzzer, but I heard a lot of shuffling and noise. I quietly crept upstairs. The door was half open and I saw her awkwardly bending over from the edge of her seat, trying to pick something up with a kleenex. My heart pounded, not knowing what had priority: her pride or her balance in the chair.

I realized what was going on. She had thought it stupid for a granddaughter to have to help her grandmother to a toilet: she had tried to make the few steps herself and hadn't made it. I fought back some hot tears, as I saw her pick the feces up and fling it across the floor underneath her dresser.

I selected a bright yellow piece of glass for humor.

"Don't feed the dog cookies, Mom."

"Oh, it's just the crumbs and broken pieces that I'm giving her," my grandmother replied, as she smashed three cookies with her fist.

A dark grey piece of glass was the core of human nature: fear.

"Good night, Grandma," I looked in the room and saw the dark form shaking; I rushed over, and she sobbed, "I don't think you're going to have a grandmother much longer."

A burgundy piece of glass represented the pain of love.

"Why the ambulance?" my grandmother asked. My mom avoided eye contact as she mumbled rather unconvincingly, "Just some tests, Mom, just a few tests. That's all." My mother watched the ambulance drive away with my grandmother inside.

A large white section of glass was firmly placed in the centre of the window.

The smell made my stomach turn, that disinfected yet stale hospital smell. There was a sound of a man hacking until it became a ripe, wet cough. I looked straight ahead, avoiding looking into the rooms to the left and right of me for fear of seeing the frightening physical results of the dreadful disease.

I entered the room and saw my parents and uncles and aunts around the bed. I came hesitantly forward and horror ran through my body. There was my dear grandmother, curled up in fetal position, head tilted back, toothless mouth wide open, gasping and struggling for each breath. "Say goodbye, she can hear you," my mother gently urged me forward. I kissed the wet forehead: I didn't know what to say. Could she hear me? Where was she really? Did she feel the extreme pain her body seemed to be experiencing? Was she scared? Was she alone? Typical words of comfort, poetry and Scripture seemed irrelevant watching the physical side of death.

The raw feeling of reality sunk in as I sat numbly in church. It was that unbelievable, dazed and inescapable feeling. I stared at the coffin, having a hard time understanding that my grandmother was inside the box, her body about to be buried like the bulb I novicely planted the past fall.

Empty words of comfort floated over to me at the reception after the service. It was all so abstract. How could you believe? Yet how could you not?

My grandmother's window was beautiful when it was finished. I stood back and admired the beauty and essence in its fragmented stains. I left her window in the cathedral but wrote down its blueprint. Some day I wanted to be able to appreciate the placements, colors and content of the pieces of glass. But more importantly, I wanted to be able to peer into the whole window and learn from it.

Leanne Stam teaches English at Hamilton District Christian High School and has taken general writing courses to feed her joy in writing.

Short Story

THE MAJOR'S KID

CC FILES

Patricia Liszkay

All right. So maybe we did push the kid a little far that day. But, hey, he had it coming. Or least we *thought* he did. I mean, how were we supposed to know who that kid *really* was? To us he was Jeremy Shuward, Jeremy the Jerk, Big-shot-Shuward, too good to hang with the rest of the kids in the post housing area just because his father was Army Major Henry Shuward, transferred to our small post from some big-cheese military assignment in Washington, D.C.

"Shuward thinks he's cool beans 'cause his old man's a major." That's what Dean said one day when a bunch of us were hanging out, shooting some baskets on the playground behind the housing area.

"Well, gee," said Mary, "my dad's a major, too!"

"Yeah," Dean said, "but you don't have a problem about it."

"Maybe he's prejudiced against black kids," suggested Marcus, who's black.

"Or maybe he's got a thing against Puerto Rican guys," I added, being Puerto Rican myself.

"Oh, he probably can't stand girls!" wailed Erin.

"Aw, come off it!" Tim finally cut in. "Look, the kid's an army brat like the rest of us, isn't he? He's *gotta* know how to mix!"

We all nodded. I told them how the first Saturday after Jeremy moved in my dad and I were walking over to the PX for some lunch when we saw him sitting on his front step. My dad told me to go and invite "the new boy" to come with us.

"Did he come?" Mary asked.

"Ha, you kidding?"

"Well, *I* believe it," Erin huffed. "When I went up to him in the school cafetaria and told him how my dad worked in his dad's office he just sort of sneered like he could care less. Last time I try to be nice to him!"

"And talk about a guy who can't take a joke!" Jason added. "All I did was toss that picture

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of those dead cockroaches on his desk...."

"Aw, man, that picture was wicked," Dean cut in, "especially how you wrote 'Jeremy's family reunion' at the top!"

"Boy, did he get mad," I said, recalling the scene in our eighth grade class. "Crumpled the picture up and threw it across the room!"

"He sure got a detention for that!" Jason laughed.

"You wish!" Dean snapped. "Shuward got out of that detention. The teachers are so *understanding* when it's an officer's kid!"

"Oh yeah?" Tim spat, "Well, I'm an officer's kid and I never got out of a detention!"

"Me neither," added Jason indignantly, "And my mom's a master sergeant!"

That is *so* unfair! moaned Erin.

"Gee, I don't know," Mary spoke up. "Maybe he was having a bad day."

"I'd like to give him a bad day," murmured Tim.

"Whoa, Mama, and today could be the day!" Jason pointed to the approaching figure of Jeremy Shuward.

"Yo, Shuward," shouted Tim, grabbing the basketball from me. "Here, catch, Shuward!"

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Now let me say right here that Tim never really meant to hit Jeremy in the head with that ball. I mean, for crying out loud, Shuward could easily have caught the dumb ball, or jumped out of the way. But no, he just stood there and let the ball hit him!

"Hey, man, I'm sorry," Tim called, actually sounding sorry. "Hey, you okay?"

But when Shuward ignored him, turned his back and just walked off, Tim shouted, "Dang it, Shuward, what's wrong with you, anyway!"

That was when Dean yelled, "Aw, don't worry about Shuward, he's just fine, aren't you, Shuward? Hey, how about your old man? The Major doing fine today, too?"

The kid stopped dead. He turned to us, his chest heaving, his eyes swollen with hate, anger and tears.

"Stop calling me Shuward!" he screamed, "my name's not Shuward! It's *Jones*! Jeremy *Jones*! My father is First Sergeant Paul Jones!" He spun around and glared at Dean. "You want to know how my father's doing? Well, he's *dead*! Left for the Gulf War and never came back! *Major Shuward is my step-father*!

Then he ran off.

We stood around for a few minutes. Dean, Mary, and Jason sounded like they suddenly came down with a bad case of the sniffles. Tim couldn't stop clearing his throat. And me, I kept rubbing at a sting in my eye that just wouldn't quit. Erin was out-and-out bawling.

"My dad was in the Gulf War, too," she sobbed.

"My mom was over there," Jason said softly.

"C'mon," Tim said, "Let's find him."

We fanned out across the housing area until somebody spotted Jeremy behind a building leaning his elbows against a wall, his head buried in his arms. We formed a semi-circle around him.

We watched while the sad, slouched figure of Jeremy Jones grew smaller with each step.

"Hey," Tim said softly, "you should've told us."

"Jeremy, we understand," said Mary.

"Could've been any of our dads," said Dean.

"Or my mom," added Jason.

Erin was still crying too hard to say anything.

To our surprise Jeremy turned and faced us. His eyes were no longer filled with anger, only sadness.

"Thanks guys, thanks," he muttered, then walked off.

We watched while the sad, slouched figure of Jeremy Jones grew smaller with each step then disappeared around a corner.

I felt like something inside me was about to burst. I started running, then we were all running.

Tim reached Jeremy a step ahead of the rest of us.

"Jeremy," he said breathlessly, "We want you to know that, that...."

"That you're not alone," Mary finished.

"That's right, man," Jason said, "C'mon, You got to be with us!"

"Yeah!" the others chimed in.

Jeremy hesitated. He looked at us standing around him. "Well, okay," he said softly.

So we headed off together that day, Jeremy Jones with us. Still one quiet kid, but we knew what was in his heart, and he knew we were there for him. And hey, what more did any of us need to know?

Patricia Liszkay is a freelance writer from Gahanna, Ohio.

Making the grade: Home schooling your child

Jeff Hoogendoorn

A frenzied rush repeats itself every school morning in North American homes. Kids must be scrubbed and fed. Parents must at least be scrubbed. There is the line up for the bathroom, the clothing-littered floors, the clattering of dishes, the sizzling of bacon, the pop of the toaster and the harried, "Mom, where's my science project?" All these sounds combine in an off-beat, off-tune symphony before all exit the house to begin their day in their respective environments of school and work. But not every house reveals such a rude awakening on school mornings.

Bill and Judi Toorenburgh of Victoria, B.C., say their mornings were typically rushed and harried. Since Judi began home schooling the children a few months ago, mornings have become less stressful. Bill says he felt stressed both on the way to work and while he was at work, and that this stemmed from the wild, roller coaster beginning of his day. Now he says mornings are more tranquil, and he doesn't feel the constant pressure of time.

Complex reasons

Recent years have witnessed growing numbers of parents who have thoughtfully taken their children and fled the school system for a more back-to-basics approach to education. The reasons for this exodus are varied. For the Toorenburghs, the decision to withdraw their children from school was complex and multifaceted.

For one thing, being able to afford the education they wanted to give their children was becoming a problem. Another more pressing issue was that one of their boys, Joshua, was not socializing well in Grade 1's extended day. Furthermore, he was being labeled as having Attention Deficit Hypertension Disorder (ADHD). Bill and Judi felt that to be an unfair branding since Joshua had never been diagnosed with the disorder by their family physician.

"We're not raising them to live in this world. We're raising them to go to heaven."

Judi herself recalls negative feelings of being pushed through the system in a "special needs class," the result of her dyslexia. Fearing the same route being mapped out for her son, she and Bill decided to take Joshua out of school.

Allison Preece, educator and lecturer in the education department at the University of Victoria, questions parents' reasons for taking their children out of public (or private) school in order to home school: "If it's just escapism, I'd have questions about it. If it's a positive alternative, then that's different again." While she is a staunch proponent of the educational system, Preece agrees that there may be some situations in which the child's best interest is served in a home schooling setting. She further qualifies this with the assertion that "parents and schools must first work together to exhaust all avenues" before removing the child from a school setting.

Critics often argue that children taken from school miss out on and lack proper socialization, a skill very much needed in our "palm pressing" age of power-lunches and schmoozing. Children interacting with one another learn valuable lessons of give and take, sharing and common goals.

For Theo and Fern Kwantes, also of Victoria, the decision to pull Zachary, age 7, out of school was made in part because of the socialization factor. Fern avows that Zachary's peers had conspired to injure him — *to kill him* — during recess and that these children had also had a weapon. School authorities were made aware of this after a botched attempt but did nothing, refusing even to discipline the children involved.

JEFF HOOGENDOORN

From l. to r. Drew, Judi (mother, teacher), Joshua and Joel Toorenburgh.

It is precisely these negative social skills Theo and Fern are hoping to keep their children from acquiring. Says Fern, "The best social skills are positive social skills." She is aware that people think she is hindering her child(ren) from acquiring such skills. But she counters that good social skills mean being able to relate to seniors and babies and everyone in between. In her home schooling, she and her children encounter others in a social atmosphere almost every day whether at the grocery store, the pool or the arena.

Preece questions all the negative press regarding failing educational quality and negative socialization. She purports that the media unfailingly fuels itself on the few aspects that need improvement while ignoring the countless positive aspects of institutional education. However, she does agree that socialization in school *can* be quite negative.

Children of God

The Toorenburgh and Kwantes families stress that they look at home schooling as a medium through which they can teach their children about what is most important. For Judi, it's Christian values, personal enrichment and individuality. She tries to teach her children: "You are a child of God. You are a unique individual." With this as their foundation, says Judi, they are ready to join the world. Bill also likes the fact that home schooling tends to make children become more family dependent rather than peer dependent. This, they believe, makes them less easily swayed by peer decisions and peer pressure.

Raising them for heaven

Fern says of her children, "We're not raising them to live in this world. We're raising them to go to heaven." Her first concern is Bible study, which she does every morning even if she does no other home schooling that day. Apart from the issue of violence at school, Fern adds what she truly believes to be a prime reason for her and Theo's decision to home school, and that is to prepare their children for life: "The first thing I want Zachary to know is what God wants him to be."

Deciding what to teach and how to teach your child is extremely varied and open. To begin, each home-schooled child must be registered somewhere in his or her province of residence. A correspondence-style curriculum offered by the province may be followed, as is the case in the Toorenburgh and the Kwantes families. All supplies, including paper, glue, etc., are included with the free package. A deposit on texts is the only money that needs to be expended. But curriculum may be a designed-at-home one as well. There really are no standards in this respect.

Children interacting with one another learn valuable lessons of give and take, sharing and common goals.

Preece warns that some parents may tend to view home schooling as a sort of panacea. She argues that home schooling requires an "incredible investment of time," which some parents may tend to underestimate. This is indeed the case. Many parents "drop out" within their first year because of discouragement. Preece furthermore forewarns parents to avoid pre-packaged, fill-in-the-blank curriculums which are a "pale substitute" for real learning and learning situation. Access to other things and situations outside the home is a necessary part of any home schooling program, adds Preece.

High drop-out rate

This is not lost on the Toorenburgh and Kwantes families. They visit each other once a week for a school session, go grocery shopping, visit local parks (to watch the annual salmon spawning, for example). Even every day chores become a learning experience: washing dishes, floors, and feeding the family pet.

Each family also has a computer for their children's use, making their education hands-on as well as fun through the use of educational software. And the best thing about home schooling, according to Joshua Toorenburgh — even though he still misses his friends and parties at school? "I get to stay at home with my Mom."

The doll's story

Rachel Baarda

The doll was manufactured in December. Soon the toy stores would need a large delivery for Christmas. She was put at the bottom of a box of other dolls. It was stuffy in there. Vaguely she heard a rumbling sound. Then she was aware they were moving. The doll was jolted down a bumpy road and driven over hills. Finally the motion stopped. The doll took a moment to catch a breath. *Now what*? she wondered.

She was suddenly dropped down onto a table. Then she heard a creaking sound above. She tried to look up, but the other dolls blocked her view. The top of the box was lifted up. Light streamed in. Hands lifted the top dolls out of the box. Finally the box was empty. She heard a woman's voice saying, "I ordered 350 of these. If they go too fast, I may have to order more."

A man came from another room and examined the dolls. "These are nice ones," he said. "Let's put them on the shelf in the first aisle." The doll was laid on a shelf with some of the other dolls. She looked around curiously. My, there were a lot of dolls! Rows and rows, some in boxes, some just lying on the shelves. What interested her most, however, was a furry brown toy. The toy stared at her curiously.

"What are you?" he asked. "You look like a tiny little person." The doll was indignant.

"I'm not a person at all," she replied, "I'm a doll."

"What's a doll?" he asked.

"A hard toy, same as you."

"I'm not hard, I'm soft. I'm a teddy bear," he explained.

"Oh," said the doll. "What are we doing here?"

The teddy bear shrugged. "I don't know. I just got here yesterday."

"*I* just got here today," said the doll, and they lapsed into silence. Every day after that, however, they talked together. One of their favorite topics as the days wore on was Christmas. The doll and the teddy bear had heard people talking about it as they walked through the aisles, but neither one knew what it was. The doll thought it might be a huge toy. Teddy thought it was a storm. The doll scorned that.

"They'd be frightened if it were a storm, but they seem to be excited," she said.

"Well, then I don't know what it is," the teddy said crossly.

Another thing the doll wondered about was what the people did with the toys they took off the shelves. One day a lady walked down the aisle. The doll was not paying much attention. People came into the aisles all the time. Often they took something off the shelves; sometimes they walked through without looking at anything. This lady stopped in front of the doll and looked at her for a moment. Then she picked up the bear. The doll gasped, but before she had time to think, the lady picked the doll up with her other arm. The lady took the doll under her arm, so that she could not see anything, and walked out of the aisle.

The doll felt herself being laid down, then was dropped into a stuffy bag. She wondered what would happen to her. *Is the same thing happening to me all over again? Will I be put on an other shelf in awhile? And what could she have done with the teddy bear?* A gush of cold air startled her, interrupting her jumbled thoughts. The doll realized they must be outside. After a little while she heard a thud, and when a motor started she knew she was going for a ride. She was jolted over roads and highways. Finally the ride ended. She was taken out and put in a dark place where she lay for two or three days, wondering what would happen to her.

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Ten-year-old Rachel Baarda and her mother /teacher, Nelly.

At last the doll was picked up and taken out of the bag, but no sooner was she out than she was being wrapped in some prettily decorated paper. The doll studied the paper with interest as she was being wrapped. It was red with pictures of a man, a lady and a baby. The baby was in a wooden box with legs, lying on what looked to the doll like some yellow sticks. She had seen a picture of those people before. She wondered if it had something to do with Christmas.

Too soon she was completely wrapped and was picked up and set down on the floor again somewhere else. By this time she was too tired to care where she was. She soon fell into a deep sleep.

The doll was awakened by singing. She could make out the words *Joy to the world. Joy to the world.* Christmas was a happy time. What was it that made people so happy? Then the singing stopped. There was a rustling of pages. A man began to read, "...So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David.... He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

They celebrate Christmas because a baby was born! the doll mused. *I don't understand.* But then, there were a lot of things she did not understand.

Suddenly, children shrieked, laughing about something. Without warning, the doll's paper was torn off, and she found herself looking into the eyes of a little girl.

"Oh, what a pretty doll!" the girl exclaimed. "Such pretty yellow hair and blue eyes. I'll call her Lucinda."

Lucinda. The doll was trying out her new name when out of the corner of her eye she saw a little boy tearing off the paper of another present. Why, it couldn't be.... But yes, there was the teddy bear from the store! The teddy saw her and waved.

"How did you get here?" he asked, blinking his eyes as he adjusted to the new, bright light.

"I came in one of those big motor machines. They're celebrating Christmas here," Lucinda explained.

"Celebrating a *storm*?" The teddy bear's furry face screwed up in puzzlement.

"No, no, Christmas isn't a storm, and it isn't a huge toy, either. It's something to do with...." Lucinda thought for a moment, trying to recollect her new piece of knowledge. "It's something to do with a baby being born in a manger. I don't understand it all, but I like it."

"Me too," the teddy bear, whose name was Theodore, agreed.

That night the little girl took Lucinda to bed with her. In the next room, Lucinda could see Theodore in the boy's arms.

Lucinda smiled. She just knew she and Theodore would have a lot of fun together with the children in their new home.

Rachel Baarda is a 10-year-old who lives in Beamsville, Ont. She is home schooled by her mother.

A day in the life of a home school

Jeff Hoogendoorn

Barry and Alice Duits of Brentwood Bay, B.C., have home schooled five of their six children on the family farm for the past five years. Their reasons are straightforward. They want to work more with their children's characters and "to teach them the Lord's values."

The children are registered with the school board in Vanderhoof, B.C., in the interior of the province. The Duits chose Vanderhoof because it offers a Christian curriculum as well as two computers, 120 hours of Internet access per month, and gives $200 a year per student for expenses.

School begins at approximately 8:45 with prayer and Scripture reading. The older children retire to their bedrooms or other quiet places and work independently for a few hours, or teach kindergarten. The younger ones work more closely with their mother and work on, perhaps, the computer, math or reading. Before noon, they all gather together and Alice reads them a story. She says that even the older kids truly enjoy the time together as a family, listening to a story. Alice believes this fosters a sense of family and is a prime example of positive socialization, unlike peer socialization which is often negative. The older kids become role models for the younger ones.

Alice loosely follows a curriculum and the children learn what they are truly interested in. One son is fascinated by owls and other birds and animals so he reads everything about that in preparation for his aspiration of becoming a veterinarian. At the same time, Alice says, "They've never done ancient Greece because nobody's interested in ancient Greece."

Every afternoon begins with a schedule of chores. The boys take care of the outside work on the farm: the animals, the equipment, raking leaves. The girls take care of things around the house and learn to sew, babysit others, and volunteer helping single mothers. Alice believes that she is helping her children to be pro-family. "The boys are learning to be good husbands and the girls are learning to be good mothers," she adds.

All the children earn their own money and are encouraged to save some and to tithe some. This teaches them the value of work and the responsibility that comes with money.

The parents are trying to instill self-esteem in their children, as well as a knowledge that their dreams can be reached. Alice believes that the virtual elimination of peer pressure has allowed her children to grow and to be themselves. Her oldest son, Jason, is a cowboy who breaks horses and makes his own clothes and ropes. He wants to work on ranches to bring the gospel. He wants to be a missionary and reads everything about it.

As for regular school? Every year, Alice gives each child the opportunity to think about whether or not she or he would like to return to the classroom. So far she has heard a resounding No.

Jeff Hoogendoorn is Christian Courier's *news correspondent based in Victoria, B.C.*

Advice

Peter and Marja are IN

Give your children, and your anger, over to God

Dear P & M:

My husband and I are in our 50s and have three grown children who have moved away. Not unlike in many solid Christian Reformed homes, we raised our children in the "fear of the Lord."

Once our children were born I became a stay-at-home mom. Looking back, I believe we communicated well and left little unresolved. We never missed opportunites for devotions and sharing. Our moral standards were high and we practiced them consistently as parents. We faithfully sent all of our children to Christian school. We were not perfect parents, but our kids suffered no traumatic events such as death, divorce, abuse or an unhappy parental marriage.

Now here is our problem: two of our children have gone the way of the world. Our daughter lives with a man and our son is into pornography. The filth and garbage they watch on TV makes me want to throw up, and their lifestyles are worse than that of my non-Christian neighbor.

We have confronted them but continue to visit them, since it has always been our policy to keep the door open. Visiting them, however, is painful. I'm often so very angry that I'd like to divorce them.

There seem to be no answers: not from our pastor, friends and relatives, from books, or even from the Bible. I feel depressed and discouraged. All these years I've watered, fed and tended the fields with care, and now that the harvest time is here I'm pulling only weeds. I truly regret that we spent over $70,000 in Christian school tuition.

I question whether my kids are God's elect. If they were not chosen by God for salvation, is it God's fault that they don't serve him? Or should I view them as God's elect who have made the choice to reject their chosen status?

I do realize that somehow, someday they could both experience a radical conversion. In the meantime I feel that God has not crowned our efforts with success. Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think that our children could choose such sinful ways. I truly regret having had children. I think I'm becoming a bitter, old woman.

Dear Depressed About Children's Lifestyles:

You are not alone. Many of our readers are parents in pain. In fact, even God knows exactly what you feel because he is the perfect parent whose teachings have been rejected from the beginning of time. While we agonize over the choices made by the next generation, he does so over *every* generation.

Interestingly, God also had regrets about having children (Gen. 6:6). But he never stopped loving them. In fact, that's what makes Jesus so special. He is the Incarnation of God's love, and even the prostitute and the murderer felt this love.

God asks you to do one thing, and one thing only. Love your sinful children as he has loved sinful you. That's it. As Jesus found something loveable in every person he met, so you need to focus on whatever it is that allows you to celebrate your children's lives.

You have done your best. Now you are no longer responsible for their choices. Your job as parent now requires you to do nothing more than love and pray for them. Period.

The doctrine of election doesn't seem to be particularly applicable here. Instead, we want to lovingly challenge the theology which seems to direct your thinking. Somehow you've bought into the notion that right parenting will be crowned and rewarded with righteous results. This kind of "success theology" is unrealistic. As you now know, it leads to feelings of failure, anger and bitterness. The truth is, Christians are not guaranteed painless lives in reward for their faithful witness. They are, however, surprised by joy when they love with the love of Christ, without expecting anything in return.

Please go to a Christian counsellor and deal with your disappointment and anger before it turns into lasting bitterness. You need to discover what the Apostle Paul so simply but powerfully teaches in Romans 8:31-39, i.e., when everything is right, and when everything is wrong, God is for us!

In closing, see what you can take from this anecdote. An American journalist visited medical missionary Albert Schweitzer in Africa to do a story on him. On a particular day, a native, delirious with high fever, came to Schweitzer's hospital. For 24 hours Schweitzer cared for the man until his fever broke. Only then did he get some sleep himself.

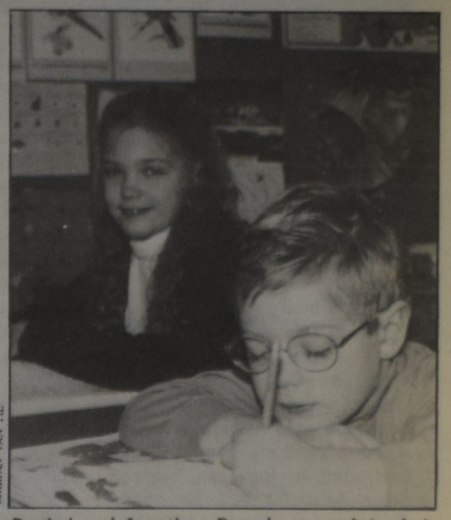
When he awoke the next day to do rounds, the patient had left, without a word of thanks. The journalist asked Schweitzer, "Doesn't this upset you?" Albert Schweitzer responded with these simple but profound words: "We are responsible for how we treat others; they are accountable for their response."

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

An opinion on home schooling

The following is an opinion piece about home schooling gleaned by CC columnist Jacob Kuntz from the Sept. 19, 1996, issue of Clarion, *the publication of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Kuntz notes that "within the circle of the Candian Reformed churches there has always been 'a strong consensus that Reformed education in Reformed schools was the right choice for believing parents of covenant youth.' But now,* Clarion *says, 'The fabric of our Reformed educational system has some significant tears.' Some families are opting for public schools, partly because of financial restraints, partly because of a lack of vision. But others are attracted to home schooling:"*



MARIAN VAN TIL

Rachel and Jonathan Baarda at work in their home "classroom" in Beamsville, Ont.

"Another philosophical factor is reflected especially in the home-schooling movement. The right of parents to home-school their children should be defended. Families which follow this course should not be ostracized. Instead, let's give them room to do what they feel is best for their children, and seek to involve them as much as possible in our communities. In some cases, they have decided to home-school because the Christian school proved to be an intollerable or unworkable environment for their own children.

"While they do complain at times about being ostracized, home-schooling families can themselves fall into the grip of an insular mentality which leads to self-isolation. We may sometimes notice an absolutizing of the family as if this is the only legitimate educational institution before God. In this thinking, the family becomes a kingdom unto itself, oblivious to the broader covenantal community. It's no accident that in some circles the home-school movement is paired with the home-church movement, in which the family worships on its own with at most one or two other families and holds itself apart from the local church. What we see then, in some cases, is a kind of idolatry of the family.

"Against this absolutizing of the family, we need to emphasize the legitimate concerns and interests of the whole community in each and every covenant child. After all, a child of believing parents belongs to God's church and congregation! Yes, parents have a great responsibility to being up their children in the fear of the Lord. But the children belong in the first place to God and his covenant, which is to say, also to his church and congregation — his covenantal family. Hence, Christian education should as much as possible reflect this covenantal identity of the child.

Look like Christian schools

"It's somewhat ironic that the best home-schools soon come to resemble Christian schools, for home-schooling parents soon band together to provide opportunities for music instruction, choirs, sports activities and foreign language learning.

"What we have in the best home-schooling situtions is a Christian school on a very small scale with a great deal of parental involvement. Perhaps the gap between home-schooling and Christian day schools is in some cases not so much philosophical as pragmatic, a difference of methods rather than principles.

What Christmas means to four young girls

Granted, it was an assignment given to the Grade 8 students at John Knox Memorial Christian School in Fruitland, Ont. And the teacher, Dick Windhorst, choose the best four to be sent to* Christian Courier. *But that doesn't diminish the delightful tone of these four little essays on "What Christmas Means to Me."

Christmas Day has passed, but the 12 days of Christmas stretch into January, until Epiphany (the visit of the Magi) on January 6. And some of the Eastern Orthodox churches still use the old calendar which celebrates Christmas on January 7. So it's quite proper to reflect in early January on the meaning of Christmas. These four young scholars help us do that.

I like the carols and the church service

Jennifer De Jonge

To me, Christmas means spending time with family and friends. Every year our family gets together, we have a dinner and we exchange gifts. Everyone contributes to the food and the grandchildren pick names for the giving of presents. We also decorate a Christmas tree. It's fun to be able to get together and have a good time.

Christmas is also a time to worship God. We go to church on Christmas Day to celebrate. We sing Christmas carols and praises to God. I like the carols, and the church service is interesting even though we hear the story every year. It's the kind of thing you can never get sick of.

COURTESY JOHN KNOX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

L. to r.: Maria Dekker, Joy Van Marion, Emily Baarda and Jennifer de Jonge.

God is so compassionate and generous that he sent his Son for us. If there were more people in our world like God, there wouldn't be as many sick, needy or homeless. The true meaning of Christmas is Jesus' birth, and if he wouldn't have been born, our sins would not be forgiven. So Christmas to me is also a time to give thanks.

We open presents on December 5

Joy Van Marion

Christmas for me is centred on Jesus' birth. It's a special time to celebrate God's gift to us with friends and family. Of course there are other aspects that make the holiday special, such as the beautifully decorated tree and the presents in all shapes and sizes underneath it. Then there's always sledding and playing in the snow. And who can pass up Mom's Christmas baking, with a steaming cup of hot chocolate?

In our family we observe a Dutch tradition in which the presents are opened on December 5 instead of December 25. It works well this way because it doesn't let the excitement of exchanging gifts keep you from focussing on the true meaning of Christmas.

We read the Christmas story with candles burning

Maria Dekker

To me, Christmas is the happiest time of the year. Everyone is in a good mood all the time (almost everyone), and there are so many fun things to do: setting up your Christmas tree, giving people presents, eating by candlelight, playing in the snow, and singing all the beautiful Christmas carols.

My favorite part, though, is the closeness of the family during Christmas. I love doing things with my family because we don't get to do them very often. And my favorite thing to do with them is reading the Christmas story when we are sitting by the table with candles burning.

I think that giving plays a large role in Christmas, too. God, the Great Giver, set the example of giving of yourself when he gave us Jesus — the greatest gift of all.

We eat 'peppernuts' and sip eggnog

Emily Baarda

What does Christmas mean to me? Christmas is a time when my immediate family can meet together with our extended families. Sometimes we get to see relatives that we haven't seen for quite a long time. Last Christmas I got to see my cousins who live in British Columbia.

Christmas is also a time when my family gets packed in the car and heads off to my grandma's house for a turkey dinner with my mom's side of the family. After supper we sit around a table and try to guess who had to buy us a gift. In the days before Christmas it is often hard to keep your person a secret without giving too many hints.

I also enjoy Christmas with my immediate family. After our Christmas Eve church service, we open our presents while eating "peppernuts" [*pepernoten* made of gingerbread] and sipping eggnog.

In the Christmas season it is easy to get caught up in the secular aspects, with the mythological Santa Claus. We often think of ourselves before we think of those around us who have more serious needs, such as not enough food or a warm place to sleep.

I think that before we ask ourselves what we want for Christmas, we should ask what we can do for the less fortunate.

A favorite recipe

Josie's caramel nut squares

The following is a recipe of Marian Van Til's mother's. It was Marian's favorite childhood Christmas time treat.

Bottom layer:
1/2 cup butter or margarine
1 cup flour
1 egg
dash of salt

Combine ingredients, spread in 9 x 13" (or slightly smaller) baking pan. Bake 15 min. at 350 degrees.

Top layer: 1 1/2 cups brown sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/2 tsp. baking powder, 1 cup coconut, 1/2 to 1 cup chopped walnuts, 1 tsp. vanilla, 2 eggs.

Mix all of the above. Spread over cooled baked bottom layer. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Cut into squares. Decorate with maraschino cherries, if desired.

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c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

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We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

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Thank You.

Graduation

SCHREIBER:

Congratulations to Dr. Martha Patricia Schreiber!

Bertus and Alice Schreiber are proud to announce the graduation of their daughter

MARTHA PATRICIA SCHREIBER

with a Doctorate in Biochemistry from the University of Alberta in November 1996. Her previous educational achievements are: Master of Science and Biology, from Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., as well as a Bachelor in Education from that same university; previous to that, a Bachelor of Science with Honors in Biochemistry, from the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ont. Martha is a graduate from Bell High School, Nepean, Ont., and she started her education at the Ottawa Christian School. She is presently doing a post doctorate at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont. Congratulations from your parents, Bertus and Alice Schreiber; Chong; Sylvia & Tymen, Kyle and Vykki; John; Derek & Jane, Kessie and Benjamin. Martha is a granddaughter of the late John and Sylvia Schreiber of Glen Williams, Ont., and of Dirk Van Rooyen and the late Martha Van Rooyen of Chatham, Ont.

Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Call accepted:
— First Kingston, Ont., Rev. Christopher J. De Vos, of Atlanta, Georgia.

Call declined:
— First, Drayton, Ont., Rev. Jack Kerkhof of Burlington, Ont.

Anniversaries

Garijp Phelpston
1947 January 9 1997

We give thanks to our heavenly Father for His continued faithfulness as we hope to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents

JAN and AUKJE TJEERDSMA
(nee KLOOSTERMAN)

"I will counsel you and watch over you" (Ps.32:8b).

Tjeerd & Rose Tjeerdsma — Stayner, Ont.
Lisa, Heather, Erica, John

Eelke & Jane Tjeerdsma — Phelpston, Ont.
Christina, John Peter, Jenny, Edward

Alie & George Strampel — Stayner, Ont.
Jeremy, Elizabeth, Peter (deceased 1996)

Peter & Jane Tjeerdsma — Phelpston, Ont.

Symen & Patti Tjeerdsma — Wasaga Beach, Ont.
Hannah, Nathan, Amy, Adam

Open house at First Chr. Ref. Church of Barrie, Ont., on Jan. 11, 1997, between 2-4 p.m. Best wishes only.

Home address: R.R. #1, Phelpston, ON L0L 1K0

Obituaries

Spijk, Gr. Strathroy, Ont.
Feb. 19, 1908 - Nov. 28, 1996
Phil. 4:4-7

Suddenly, at home, the Lord took to be with Him

HENRY BERGHUIS

in his 89th year.

Beloved husband of Nel (nee Knibbe).

Dear father of:
Peter & Hilda Berghuis — Ingersoll, Ont.
Elly & Wayne Skarratt — Guelph, Ont.
Andy Berghuis — Woodstock, Ont.

Dear grandfather of:
Henry & Heather, Wendy & Bryan, Marlene & Maarthen, Christopher & Catharine, Raymond and friend Michelle, Kevin & friend Carolyn.

Dear great-grandfather of five.

Predeceased by first wife Martha (Smit), 1985, son Andrew, 1945, three brothers and one sister.

The funeral service was conducted by Pastors VandenEnde and Pennings on Dec. 2, in East CRC, Strathroy, Ont.

Correspondence address:
Mrs. Nel Berghuis, 251 Riverview Dr., Strathroy, ON N7G 2G4

Look for Peter and Marja on page 14...

Teachers

LETHBRIDGE, Alta.: Immanuel Chr. School, Lethbridge, Alta. Due to retirement of the acting high-school **vice-principal** after 31 years of service, ICS is looking to fill the position, which includes a substantial teaching load. Applicants should be knowledgeable about and committed to the Reformed world and life view. Please direct your inquiries and resumes to:

Mr. Mike Wind
Board Chairperson
P.O. Box 4749
Taber, AB T1G 2E1
Phone: (403) 223-8391
Fax (403) 223-8391

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School anticipates hiring another **full-time teacher** for 1997/98. This position is required as a result of growth in our Grades 10-12 school. Consider joining our caring, encouraging society, who together with an excellent staff, work to provide an education rooted in the Reformed tradition to a great group of 100+ high school students. We encourage those with experience and/or expertise in arts and/or business education to apply, However, we will consider all applicants who are willing and able to teach a variety of core subjects. Applicants should preferably be graduates of a Christian college and/or having teaching experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Chr. High School
22 Eagle Rd.
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G7
Phone: (403) 782-4535
Fax: (403) 782-5425

For Sale

For sale: Solid 12 foot oak church pews. There are approximately 25. The style is contemporary with a cantilever end. $300 per pew or best offer. For more information you can contact: **Norma Vanderlaan, 177 Waterloo St., Exeter, ON N0M 1S2. Phone (519) 235-4667 or fax (519) 663-9200.**

For Rent

APARTMENTS: Redeemer College has 2- and 4-bedroom, furnished apartments available. Can be rented daily, weekly or monthly at reasonable rates. No lease required. Please call **(905) 648-2131, ext. 260 or 290.**

Caregiving Needed

Host family required for wheelchair-bound mom and healthy four-month-old baby (longterm). Respite and support services will be available. Caregiver will be financially compensated. If interested, please call **Rehoboth Home, Springfield, Ont., (519) 765-4207**, for more information.

Personal

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of bel: (416) 289-0706

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FACULTY POSITIONS

Dynamic curriculum development and a record student enrollment result in the need for additional Christian academicians for openings beginning August 1997 in the following areas:

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Philosophy:
Introductory and upper level courses
Psychology: Introductory and upper level courses in the field of applied social/cognitive psychology
Physics:
Introductory and upper level courses, contribution to general education and another discipline.
Theology (two positions):
general education courses in Biblical theology and philosophy, upper level courses in Biblical studies, church ministries, missions, and Greek.

Qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to **Dr. Rockne McCarthy; Dordt College; 498 4th Ave. NE; Sioux Center, IA 51250; facsimile: 712-722-4496; e-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu**

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution and encourages the nominations and candidacies of women and minorities.

Miscellaneous

REINDERS architecture

MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP-EDUCATION AND CARE FACILITIES HAVE MADE US A VALUED BUILDING-PARTNER TO MANY CONGREGATIONS AND CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS. PLEASE CALL TO LEARN HOW WE CAN HELP YOU!

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Calvin Chr. School offers a Christ-centred education to 357 students (K to 9) from various denominations in the Greater Winnipeg area. Applicants must qualify for Manitoba certification (60 hours minimum in education courses).

Please send your resume and statement of educational philosophy to:

Principal Search Committee
c/o Len Hordijk
425 Bonner Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2G 1B4
For further information call
(204) 338-7981

Closing date for applications: **January 15, 1997**

Thunder Bay Christian School
seeks

PRINCIPAL—ADMINISTRATOR

to begin **August 1997**

The school is SK-9, with 9 full-time staff, and 6 part-time. TBCS was founded in 1962 and by the grace of God has been blessed with continued growth. Present enrollment is 268. This school adheres to the Reformed Creedal Standards. Compensation is based on O.A.C.S. administrator's grid. Picturesque Thunder Bay is situated along Lake Superior, serving a community of approximately 140,000, in the geographical centre of Canada.

Deadline for applications is **January 15, 1997.**
For further information contact,
Edward Breukelman, phone/fax (807) 475-6979 or send application to:
Edward Breukelman
Search Committee
c/o Thunder Bay Christian School
R.R. #2, Arthur St. W., Thunder Bay, ON P7C 4V1

SEEKING A PASTOR

Horizon Community Church, a new CRC ministry of 100 families, is seeking a pastor. The church is located in the thriving suburban community of Highlands Ranch, a part of the **Denver Metropolitan area**. Key to the church's program is Bible-based dynamic preaching, enthusiastic worship, and sharing of the gospel in active outreach to a suburban community. Essential to the church's development is continued facilitation of the merging of two congregations and leadership for staff ministry. Please send inquiries and/or resumes to the **Search Committee, Horizon Community Church, 7140 S. Colorado Blvd., Littleton, CO 80122.**

Langley Christian Schools

invites applications for an

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL
for K-5 Campus of 330+ students
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MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
for 6-8 level of 180 students.

LCS is a well-established interdenominational Christian school going through building and growth changes. We are in need of visionary, energetic, educational leaders who are able to function as part of a K-12 administrative team.

Please forward complete applications or direct enquiries to:

Leo Smit, Principal
21789-50th Avenue
Langley, BC V3A 3T2
Telephone: (604) 533-2222 or fax: (604) 533-7276.

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Calgary Christian School
seeks a
SECONDARY PRINCIPAL

Calgary Christian School (CCS) is a well-established, inter-denominational school with 635 students in grades K-12.
A **Secondary Principal** is required to direct and oversee the operations of the secondary campus with a staff of 20 and approximately 225 students in grades 8-12.
The Principal must be able to articulate a sound vision of Christian education and be committed to working as a member of an administrative team.
CCS seeks a principal with training and experience in Christian educational leadership and excellent communication and interpersonal skills. The successful candidate must be qualified for Alberta Teaching Certification.
Please send resume, a statement of your vision of Christian education and leadership, and references to:

Mr. J. Lindemulder, Chairperson of the Board
Calgary Christian School, 2839-49 Street S.W.
Calgary, AB T3E 3X9
Phone: (403) 242-2896
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Toronto District Christian High School is soliciting applications from **chemistry/physics specialists** who would like to join a team with a vision for the future of high school education. Please contact me if you have any desire for this job which begins **August 1, 1997.** Send applications to **Ren Siebenga, c/o TDCH, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8. E-mail: siebenga@tdch.torcon.com**

Volunteers Needed

The Seafarers Centre is in need of Christian couples to serve in 1997 as volunteers in our ministry in the beautiful port city of Montreal. The work is rewarding and does not require many special skills. It consists mainly of day-to-day things that most people already know how to do, like driving, making coffee, talking to people, showing hospitality, etc. We prefer a one-month commitment, and are able to provide comfortable private lodgings. If you are interested, please contact our chaplain, **Rev. Mike Winnowski, at 201 de la Commune Street West, Montreal, QC H2Y 2C9, tel. (514) 844-1476, fax (514) 844-1472 or e-mail: SEAFARER@IETC.CA**

Host couple needed

The Seafarers Centre is seeking to hire a Christian couple to be our full-time, salaried Host and Hostess. The work is rewarding and does not require many special skills. It mainly consists of day-to-day things that most people already know how to do, like driving, making coffee, talking to people, showing hospitality, etc. Requires a firm commitment to Christ and a desire to serve others in his love. If you are interested, please contact our chaplain, **Rev. Mike Winnowski, at 201 de la Commune Street West, Montreal, QC H2Y 2C9, tel. (514) 844-1476, fax (514) 844-1472 or e-mail: SEAFARER@IETC.CA**

Thank You

A warm thank you!

The Seafarers Centre staff and volunteers (Montreal, Que.) would like to express their most heartfelt thanks to all those individuals, groups and congregations who helped in the preparation and transportation of Christmas parcels for seafarers during our 1996 "Christmas at Sea" campaign. It always strikes us as nothing short of miraculous that thousands of parcels come to us from all over the continent, spend a brief time in our workroom, then go out literally all over the world to be opened at Christmas as tokens and reminders of God's love. It is our great privilege to be the conduits of God's love — and of *your* love — to seafarers the world over. **THANK YOU!**

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Circulation Manager
Christian Courier.

Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

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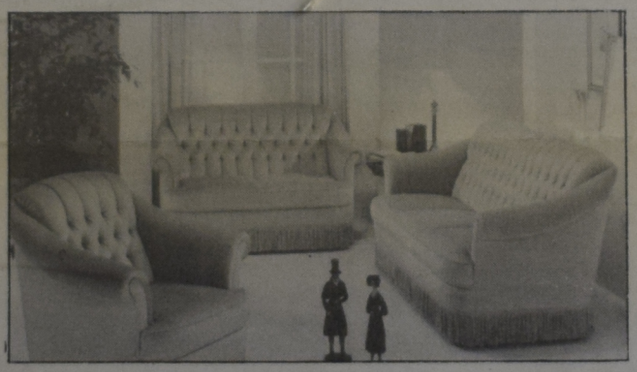

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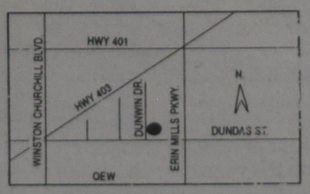
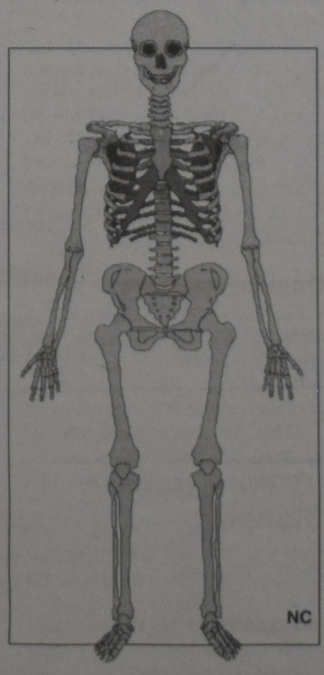


Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

Your skeleton — your "calcium" bank account

NUTRITION NOTES

(NC)—Calcium is the most abundant mineral in your body. Most of the calcium, 99 percent in fact, is found in your bones and teeth. It's the calcium that imparts to them their mechanical strength and structure. The other one percent is found in your body cells and your blood and other body fluids. However, it is the level of calcium in your blood that is of vital importance. It must be maintain within a very narrow range to perform a number of essential and basic regulator functions. Calcium is required for the contraction and relaxation of all muscles, including the heart beat. Calcium not only helps the blood to clot but is also essential for the proper functioning of the nerves and virtually all the cells in your body. Because your body cannot produce its own calcium, it relies on you to eat adequate amounts of calcium-rich foods every day.



Think of your skeleton as a "bank" and your bones as your "bank account" for calcium. If your diet is low in calcium, and the level of calcium in your blood drops below normal, your body "withdraws" the calcium, that it needs from your bones. When your diet is rich in calcium, you make "deposits" in your bank account. If your "withdraws" exceed your "deposits", your bones begin to weaken as their calcium reserves become depleted.

Your requirement for calcium reflect the needs of your skeleton for calcium. During periods of active growth—infancy, childhood and adolescence—your need for calcium are much greater as your bones increase in length and width. From the age of twelve, the bones continue to grow in density and strength until your "peak bone mass" is achieved possibly by the mid-thirties. Old bone is continuously replaced by new bone. As you grow older, the body takes calcium from your bones more quickly than you can replace it. The amount of calcium that you consume on a daily basis, coupled with moderate weight-bearing exercise, can go a long way to building and maintaining strong and healthy bones. You never outgrow the need for calcium. Or, for that matter, milk products — the number one source of calcium in the Canadian Diet.

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Jan. 3-4 New Year's concerts by organists Andre Knevel and Willem van Suydam. Audience participation! Both events at 8 p.m. **Jan. 3:** Chalmers United Church, **Woodstock,** Ont.; **Jan. 4:** Central Presb. Church, **Hamilton,** Ont.

Jan. 26 Dutch worship service led by Rev. Ralph Koops, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Feb. 4 The 1997 annual "Church & the Law Seminar," hosted by the Orangeville law firm of Wardlaw, Mullin, Carter & Thwaites in conjunction with the Can. Council of Christian charities. From 8:45 a.m. through 3:45 p.m., in Toronto at the Queensway Cathedral, 1536 The Queensway, **Etobicoke**, Ont. Guest speakers include Prof. M.H. Ogilvie (Carleton University) and lawyer George Grange (Washington, D.C.). The seminar is designed for pastors, church leaders and Christian charities to provide information on current legal issues. Pre-register by Jan. 28, 1997, at $5 per person, by contacting the CCCC at (519) 669-5137 or fax (519) 669-3291.

Mexico needs a third way, says seminary prof

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Dr. John Roberts was making a tour through southern Ontario in the latter half of November on behalf of the John Calvin Theological Seminary in Mexico City. He also spoke at Jubilee Fellowship Christian Reformed Church.

The seminary has fallen on hard times, along with most other institutions in Mexico. The history of an obscene distance between a few rich and millions of poor is continuing in this part of Latin America as the promised fruits of the NAFTA agreement benefit only a few, says Roberts. Consequently, Mexico is facing a deep economic and spiritual crisis.

The revolutionary ideas of 1910 of equality, redistribution of goods and land have come up empty, "just like in Russia." Nor have the alternatives helped, according to Roberts. The fact that the last three presidents were U.S. educated was seen as a hopeful sign. But nothing came of that. NAFTA was supposed to bring in paradise, but it hasn't. Grinding poverty continues throughout Mexico.

All the preconditions for a genuine reformation exist in Mexico, says Roberts. "Major national conferences are being held on politics, education, the economy and moral crisis. People are looking for a kind of a third way. New structures such as a Christian university and Christian schools are arising. In politics a Christian political party is in its association stage."

The intellectual vanguard

Speaking of the John Calvin Theological Seminary where he teaches ethics and moral philosophy, Roberts points enthusiastically to the Reformational scholarship that is being offered there. A Calvinist world view is being presented through authors like Berkhof, Van Riessen, Runner, Seerveld, Zijlstra, Wolters, Goudzwaard, Antonides — all names known to the Christian Reformed community in Canada.

Herman Dooyeweerd's *Roots of Western Culture* and *New Critique of Modern Thought* are being translated into Spanish. Roberts believes that these works can have a dramatic impact on thinking Christians in Latin America.

"Men at the intellectual vanguard of Mexico are affiliating with the seminary, where all 12 professors accept a biblical, Calvinist worldview.

PHOTO: BERT WITVOET

Dr. John Roberts.

Roberts tells the story of a Dr. Abelle Olivarez Rodriguez, a Pentecostal church leader and physician, who serves 20 small churches. Every week this man travels eight hours to the seminary to take in lectures. "He has seen in his own movement that when a leader of the church dies, the church goes into rapid decline. With a Calvinistic perspective, the church will remain, he says.

Being also a man of science, he appreciates the fact that the worldview offered at the seminary integrates both the spiritual and the scientific worlds he inhabits."

A broad faith

John Calvin Theological Seminary is playing a unifying role, says Roberts, in that pastors and leaders from all denomination are attracted to it. The seminary, which is owned and operated by the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico, has more non-Presbyterian than Presbyterian students. "We offer a faith that is broad enough to encompass other traditions, says Roberts.

The seminary also serves as a training centre for business people, lawyers, doctors, teachers and other professionals.

Roberts agrees that the school has had to become a mini-university as it offers an M.A. in worldview. "People want to know how to integrate their faith with their professional life," he says. "They are excited by the teachings that Christ is Lord of life."

The John Calvin Theological Seminary prides itself on the fact that it is one of the few institutions that exists on tuition alone. But of late, the economic crisis and rampant unemployment have put many students in a predicament where they can no longer pay tuition.

For that reason a group of Ontario supporters (Harry Antonides, Wybe Bylsma, Arthur Joosse, Johan Tangelder, Rene Vanderspek) who call themselves Partners in Reformational Education — Latin America are urging people in Canada to support the work of John Calvin Theological Seminary by sending donations to:

Worldwide Christian Schools (Mexico Project),
P.O. Box 81129,
RPO Fiddler's Green,
Ancaster, Ont., L9G 4X1.

Italian nun confronts rebels, wins release of schoolgirls in Uganda

Richard Nyberg

GABORONE, Botswana (Compass) — An Italian nun has boldly tracked down and convinced a group of fleeing anti-government rebels to release 109 schoolgirls they had abducted from a Catholic school in northern Uganda.

Sister Fasera Rachele, accompanied by teacher John Bosco from St. Mary's College Aboko in Gulu District, followed the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels into the bush on Oct. 7 and negotiated the release two days later of 109 girls, Sister Johann Macleod of the Verona Sisters told *Compass* in a phone interview from Kampala.

Offered money, her life

But the rebels decided to take 30 other specially chosen girls with them, arguing that they were "needed" by guerilla commander Joseph Kony, who is believed to be based in neighboring Sudan.

Sister Rachele pleaded tearfully for the release of all the girls, and went so far as to offer money, and then her own life, in exchange for their freedom. "She would have stayed in order to release the 30 that remained, but this was not accepted," explained Sister Macleod.

Some of the freed girls quoted by the ecumenical *All Africa Press Service* (APS) said the 50 or so rebels had beaten the girls who remained in captivity and smeared them with shea nut butter in a superstitious form of "protection."

Ongoing problem

Several students have been abducted by the rebels to date, but the latest incident was believed to be the largest number taken away at one time.

"This has been going on for the past 10 years. Now it has worsened since February this year," Sister Macleod asserted.

The St. Mary's College incident was the second abduction in less than two months. APS reports that on Aug. 21, about 150 students of Sir Samuel Baker School in Gulu District were seized by rebels in an enforced recruitment exercise. Many of these girls were believed to have been subsequently raped.

Fighting between rebel and government forces began in 1986 when President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement/ Army (NRM/A) came to power. The LRA is a remnant of militant "prophetess" Alice Lakewena's radical Holy Spirit Army, which was defeated by Museveni's troops in 1988. Lakwena's forces suffered hundreds of casualties as they believe the Holy Spirit would protect them against bullets.

The LRA launched its present guerilla campaign in early 1994. Kony is reported to be a relative of Lakwena, who is presently in exile in neighboring Kenya.

Following God's law?

Local Uganda newspapers have described the LRA as a radical "Christian fundamentalist group" which intends to rule the country according to the Ten Commandments.

Church sources say at least six Catholic missionaries have been abducted by LRA forces in the past two years.

News Digest

What's in a name?

REYKJAVIK, Iceland — Surnames virtually don't exist in Iceland, reports *The Christian Science Monitor.* This country of only 260,000 people still uses the ancient Norse system of patronymics when it comes to last names.

A child takes as a last name his or her father's first name, combined with the word "son" or "daughter. For example, "Bengt Olafsson's son Rolf is Rolf Bengtson. Bengt's daughter Ingrid is Ingrid Bengtsdottir, a name she will keep even if she marries. Bengt's wife might be named Greta Jansdottir (John's daughter).

To add to the confusion — at least for foreigners — people are listed in telephone books only by first names.

Versta je Engels?

COTATI, Calif. — This northern California town recently acquired a valuable import from the Netherlands: a $5,500 (US) Belgian Malinois police dog named Collin, paid for by citizens' donations and city funds, reports *Newsweek.*

When Collin's two-legged partner, Tony Werner, took him home, Werner's wife thought the dog seemed none too smart. Her command to get off the bed just made him lie down. The problem wasn't stupidity. Despite the dog's English name he understands only Dutch, and "off" sounds like "af," which means "down" to him.

When word of the dilemma got out, six people offered to give Werner Dutch lessons so he can communicate better with his canine partner. The police department agreed to an offer, but Werner joked, "Collin's used to my pronunciation. I hope he doesn't get confused."